BUSINESS / B1
Bangko Sentral hints at end to rate hikes

WORLD / A20
Planet facing mass die-off of animals, plants, say experts

ENTERTAINMENT / E1
Kris Aquino pays touching musical tribute to her mom

METRO / A17
2 Aquila Legis fratmen nabbed over mauling case

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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PNP promotion now tied to cops' waistlines

By Akaia Papa

CALLING THE PNP Police, The Philippine National Police (PNP) has required officers seeking a promotion to be able to climb a 10-story building.

PNP PROMOTION, A4

A BFAD TECHNICIAN holds up a carton of Yili milk, one of two Chinese milk brands that tested positive for the industrial chemical melamine. A4

2 positive for melamine

But BFAD clears 28; 200 still to be tested

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Michael Lim Ubac

HEALTH AUTHORITIES yesterday declared 28 milk and milk products—including some well known brands—as free of contamination but said two similar products made in China that they had tested should be permanently taken off the shelves for containing the industrial chemical melamine.

Not only that. The two China-made milk and milk products which tested positive for melamine may also have been smuggled into the country, the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) said. *(See full list on Page A4.)*

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III identified the two China-made products as Grasicfood Yili Fresh Milk and Mengniu Drink.

Those who have consumed the two products should consult doctors, especially if they are feeling something unusual, Duque said at a press conference.

DUQUE SPEAKS, A4

BLESS THE BEAST This orangutan named Pacquiao takes sisters of the Holy Face of Jesus on a hands-on tour of the Malabon Zoo. That's zoo owner Manny Tangco beaming behind the visitors. Today is World Animal Day. MARY JOHN

There may be 1,000 tamaraws in the wild

By TJ Burgonio

AFTER BEING DECIMATED TO NEAR EXTINCTION, tamaraws have maintained a stable population of over 200 in the wilds of Occidental Mindoro since 2001, but there could be more than 1,000 of them out there.

This year, some 269 heads have been counted on the island of Mindoro, up by 50 heads the previous year, environment and provincial officials said yesterday.

"To have 50 more tamaraws, that's an accomplishment," Dr. Lydia Echauz, Far Eastern University president, said in a forum, heading environment and Mindoro officials for their conservation program.

The tamaraw is the icon of the university; its basketball players are known as the Tamaraws.

From a high of 10,000 in the 1900s, the population of the tamaraw has been drastically reduced to 200 heads in the late 1970s due to the destruction of their habitat by logging and cattle-ranching, as well as hunting.

The tamaraw, a cross between a carabao and a deer, is one of the world's 284 endemic mammal species. It can only be found on Mindoro island.

Environment officers have counted 269 heads this year in their habitat in Mt. Iglit-Baco Natural Park on the island, according to Antonio Manila of the Protected Area and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB).

From 185 heads in 2003, the population jumped to 253 in 2002 and further increased to 261 in 2003, but dipped to 252 in 2004 before sharply rising to 269 in 2005. The number slipped to 263 in 2006 and 239 in 2007.

TAMS, A15

Palace, Focap at odds over coverage

By Christine O. Avendaño

ASKING THE MEDIA TO SUBmit in advance questions to be posed to President Macapagal-Arroyo is not tantamount to censorship or media management, according to Press Secretary Jesse Dureza.

Dureza made the statement to the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (Focap) in connection with the interview with Mrs Arroyo that was scheduled on Oct. 2 but was postponed by Malacañang.

He said the Pressy's "con-

PALACE, A 11

Rescuers stop search for last miner

By Elmer Kristian Dualoy
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—CONCERN FOR the rescuers' safety has prompted the Mines and Geosciences Bureau to suspend the search for the last miner trapped in an abandoned gold mine in Itogon, Benguet.

Nestoman dela Cruz, MGB director in the Cordillera, yester-

RESCUERS, A 11

Folksy, feisty Palin comes out swinging but Biden up in polls

ST. LOUIS—A WELL-COACHED Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, a novice on the American political stage and the first woman nominated by the Republicans as vice president, recited the party's campaign play book with ease in a feisty debate with Democratic opponent Sen. Joe Biden, she accused his presidential running mate Barack Obama of preparing to wave a "white flag of surrender" in Iraq.

Biden shot back Thursday night that she and Republican presidential nominee John McCain were "dead wrong" about Iraq from the beginning, and the United States was wasting $10 billion a month in that country while ignoring the real center of terrorism, Afghanistan and its mountainous shared border with Pakistan.

American voters were treated to one of the most intensely awaited political exchanges in an already historic presidential campaign that has stretched across well more than a year and culminates with the US financial system threatened with collapse and voters losing the possibility of economic pain not felt in the country since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Palin also charged Obama, the Democratic presidential nominee, of voting against funding for US troops in combat and chastised Biden for defending the move, "especially with your son in the National Guard" and headed for Iraq.

"John McCain voted against funding for the troops," as well, Biden countered, adding that McCain had been "dead wrong on the fundamental issues relating to the conduct of the war."

Biden did not immediately reply to Palin's mention of his son, Beau, the Delaware attorney general, who is scheduled to fly to Fort Bliss, Texas, on Friday before deploying to Iraq. Palin has a son who is to Iraq with the Alaska National Guard, although she did not mention that.

Palin also called Obama naive for saying he was willing

FOLKSY, A8

ON AIM after debate chat, Democrat Joe Biden makes a point to Republican Sarah Palin over her daughter Piper.

Philamlife up for sale in AIG global fallout

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST INsurance company, Philippine American Life and General Insurance Co. (Philamlife), is up for grabs as part of the global streamlining of its beleaguered parent company, American International Group Inc. (AIG).

In a statement last night, Philamlife said that "it had been identified for possible divestment along with some its affiliates."

The statement followed an announcement by AIG in New York that it would refocus on core property and casualty insurance business worldwide after receiving an $85 billion lifeline from the US Federal Reserve.

AIG, one of the world's biggest insurers, unveiled its intention to sell many "extremely valuable" assets and identified Philamlife as one of them.

Even before AIG made the announcement, Philamlife has attracted a number of suitors, including the Yuchengco group of companies.

Philamlife president and CEO Jose Cuisia Jr. said in a statement: "Philamlife remains to be stable and strongly capitalized organization. Our policyowners and clients can be assured that their interests are protected because of the company's financial strength."

"A change of ownership will not in anyway diminish policyowners' benefits and security."

PHILAMLIFE, A1

Wall Street wore nothing but false pretenses

By Cerazon P. Guidoy
Contributor

THE MELTDOWN IN THE UNITED States was caused by a mix of factors, not entirely politics. The biggest factor is the loss of an effective moral compass for the government, regulators, a large portion of corporate America and, sadly, even the US academe.

The whole situation reminds me strongly of the "Emperor's New Clothes" where Wall Street for many years now has been clothed in nothing but false pretenses of knowing what exactly was being offered on the table. Even Ivy Leaguers working in credit-rating agencies couldn't see past the sophisticated packaging of exotic derivatives. Instead of digging deeper, they put glorious ratings on these items and used elaborate words to mask their doubts and their inability to admit to their clients that many of their products didn't really make much sense.

COMMENTARY

WALL STREET, A6

WEATHER FORECAST

Metro Manila	Partly cloudy	Kalibo/Aklan	Partly cloudy
Baguio	Partly cloudy	Iloilo	Partly cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly cloudy	Cebu	Partly cloudy
Laoag	Partly cloudy	Tacloban	Partly cloudy
Clark field	Partly cloudy	Ilo-Ilo/Iloilo	Partly cloudy
Legazpi	Partly cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly cloudy
Catarman	Partly cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly cloudy
Tacloban	Partly cloudy	Davao	Partly cloudy

Second FRONTPAGE

2D3 SUERTRES

2	3	8
7	7	3
1	3	1

FOUR DIGIT

7	2	9	7
9	5	9	9

MEGALOTTO 6/45

5 13 19 22 31 35

₱8,688,250.80

Less pork, less fat in budget

Opposition solon wants appropriation trimmed by ₱100B

By Christian V. Esguerra

OPPOSITION CONGRESSMAN yesterday called for the trimming of the proposed ₱1.415-trillion national budget for next year by at least ₱100 billion amid concerns about a fallout of the US financial crisis on the Philippine economy.

House Minority Leader Ronaldo Zamora said Congress should wait the budget reduction talk what he called President Macapagal-Arroyo's "pork barrel" be channeled into the national expenditure program.

Zamora said the proposed decrease would still leave the proposed budget bigger than the current one at ₱1.3 trillion, but with "less pork, less fat in the body of the budget."

"Definitely, there will still be an increase, but sure that we can probably afford," he told reporters. "We will still have a responsible budget that addresses the requirements of more infrastructure."

Sacrificing growth

The proposed 2009 budget is bigger by ₱1.3 percent, or ₱198.1 billion, than the current national allotment.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya opposed the pacing down of the proposed budget, telling reporters that the move would be tantamount to "sacrificing economic growth."

"If they removed that amount, where would we get the fund to improve our economy next year?" he asked.

But Andaya admitted that Malacañang's economic managers were now looking at a 5-percent economic growth for next year, revised downward by 2 percent from the original assumption when the 2009 budget was drafted.

Intel funds

He said the adjustment would translate to an additional budget deficit of around ₱28 billion on top of the original ₱40 billion estimate. He said a one-percent adjustment in the growth projection of the Gross Domestic Product translated to a budget deficit of around ₱10 billion.

"We're going to have a budget deficit of really startling amounts," Zamora said.

For the proposed budget cut, the minority line would turn to cuts such as the ₱1.3-billion intelligence fund, of which ₱650 million would be under the disposal of the office of Ms Arroyo.

In their budget analyses, minority lawmakers stoked that other departments such as the Departments of Finance and Environment and Natural Resources that "require substantial intelligence fund... will have negligible allocations."

From key agencies which naturally involved intelligence work such as the Commission on Audit and the Anti-Money Laundering Council would get "zero" in intelligence fund in the 2009 budget, they said.

DAR travel budget

Another item opposition congressmen targeted is a ₱646 million travel allowance for the Department of Agrarian Reform. The amount represents a 1,581.2-percent increase from its current ₱38.1-million travel budget.

Andaya yesterday admitted that the amount was a "mistake" and should have been included in the DAR's maintenance and other operating expenses. He said his department would submit a corrected entries.

Zamora did not say whether the minority bloc was also willing to push for reductions in House items here "pork barrel" allocations, formally known as the Presidential Development Assistance Fund.

"It should start with the executive," he said, noting that members of the upper chamber received a much higher ₱70M than their counterparts in the House.

ZAMORA

'Good governance, ethical leadership possible in RP'

By Maria Cynger Gamos
Contributor

ARE GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ETHICAL leadership possible in the Philippines?

Naga City Mayor Jesse Robredo answered that question on Thursday by posing another question: "Are we ready to adopt a new mindset?"

The mayor was the globalization lecture held at the Asian Institute of Management in Makati City and titled "Good Governance and Ethical Leadership: A Continuing Challenge and Shared Responsibility."

Sponsored by the AIM Policy Center, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and Asia Society, the lecture had as speakers Robredo, Pangasinan Gov. Ed Panlilio, Isabela Gov. Grace Padaca and Mayor Sonia Lorenzo of San Isidro, Nueva Ecija—the leading lights of the recently formed Kaya Natin Ito ("We can do it") movement.

The movement espouses ethical leadership, sustainability and rising to the challenge, which Klaus Friedrich of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung described as patrimonies of a good framework of governance.

Current practices

"But this is simply not enough," Friedrich said, adding:

"The requirements to achieve this range from the necessity of strengthening leadership and choosing better leaders to providing incentives for the honest work.

"It is the people who should own the governments, and their ideas should be transmitted to the national level and sustained by the mayors at the local level."

According to the speakers, the current practices in government remain hinged on bureaucracy, lack of transparency and low level of accountability.

Corruption being the worst practice, it also means nepotism, they said.

In Japan, a law officials found guilty of acts of corruption go to the extreme of committing suicide, the speakers noted.

They said the same would not be said in the Philippines, where the situation often reverted to business as usual—something that Filipinos had gotten used to.

Governor Panlilio, a Catholic priest on leave, spoke by phone-patch in sharing his views with the packed audience.

He reiterated that good governance would always mean transparency, accountability and a sense of vision.

Padilla said he ran for governor simply because he heard not that the people of Pangasinan were clamoring for change. "It was perhaps the proper time to do so," he said.

Lorenzo's CV states that she entered public office unintentionally in 1998, and that her record of governance had since been based on the common man and a shared vision, teamwork-based and partnership.

"Everything is all about people," the mayor said. "We need to address our values. There will be harmony and empowerment only when our services are able to [generate] peace and security. If our moral values are enhanced, there will be ultimate economic stability."

Limitations, victories

While Padaca attributed some of her difficulties in being deliberately aloof—she walks with crutches, having been stricken with polio as a child—she said she had not detoured her from seeking public office and facing the consequences of being a "newbie."

"I have limitations, but I have many victories," she declared.

Padaca described her first years in the Isabela capitol as a nightmare of discoveries of unfinished and unused roads, including massive loan obligations.

She said she had also found out that by signing contracts as governor, she could obtain millions of pesos and enormous favors in return.

"Being a local official [means] power. If you are not grounded, without the right values in place, you could get tempted," she said.

'Burden of the Brave'

Padaca was given the Ramon Magsaysay Award for government service this year. (Mayor Robredo won the same award in 2008.)

Her acceptance speech, titled "Burden of the Brave," captures the core of good governance.

"Burden means 'somebody who has swum against the tide and is still swimming,'" the speech reads in part.

"This would very well apply to the other three officials, who also continue to go against the tide even if the stakes are high.

TAX CREDIT SCAM

Ombudsman stays clear of plea to recuse justice

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN HAS washed its hands of a bid to stop Sandiganbayan Justice Gregory Ong from hearing the multibillion-peso tax credit scam case initiated by Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio.

In a seven-page statement filed with the Fourth Division, Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez said the move to inhibit Ong was Villa-Ignacio's personal position and not of the entire office.

"It is the position of the Office of the Ombudsman that the incumbency status of [Ong] as Associate Justice of the Sandiganbayan must be accorded due respect rather than be doubted," Gutierrez declared.

The opposing opinion suggest the continuing stir between the two antagonistic officials. Earlier, Villa-Ignacio accused Gutierrez of resorting to some bite use of his position, but the latter denied it.

Last month, Villa-Ignacio, the lead prosecutor in the tax fraud case, also moved to inhibit Ong from further handling the tax fraud cases until the magistrate's citizenship has been finally settled.

Ong, the fourth division's chair, was earlier appointed associate justice of the Supreme Court. But he was blocked from joining the high tribunal because of questions that he is not a natural-born Filipino.

The embattled Ong is also facing a legal challenge to his position in the antigraft court.

In his motion, Villa-Ignacio had stated that Ong's alleged dual citizenship might allow the parties in the tax credit scam case to challenge the validity of the proceedings thus, public funds and personnel might be put to waste.

The cases involved businessman Panfilo Chongkan and several officials of the Department of Finance who were charged with graft in 2004 for following a post-audit report suggesting that several tax credit coupons may have defrauded the government of ₱1.3 billion using dubious tax credit certificates.

But Gutierrez said her office "always" had high respect for the acts of the duly constituted authorities.

"Thus, Justice Ong, having been appointed of associate justice of the Sandiganbayan must be allowed to perform the manifest duty to participate in the hearings of the [said] cases," she said.

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CUSTOMS DEPUTY Commissioner Ray Nicolas holds a made-in-China Snickers bar for testing by the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD). An official of Mars Inc., distributor of the chocolate bar, said it had lost P30 million in revenue after the discovery of melamine in milk, dairy and chocolate products from China.

Mars says China milk scare cost firm ₱30M

By Marjaux C. Ortiz

THE LOCAL COMPANY distributing a popular chocolate bar said yesterday it had lost P30 million in revenue since the milk scare started a few months ago.

An official of Mars Inc., distributor of Snickers chocolate bar, said the company had recorded losses after the discovery of the chemical melamine in milk, dairy and chocolate products from China.

"We've lost some P30 million in revenues since the melamine scare started," Ilmay Asuncion, Mars Inc. country head, told reporters during an inspection of the firm's shipment at the Port of Manila.

"This has been the biggest crisis me [have] faced since we started importing chocolates in 1985," he said.

'We will overcome'

Operations of the Bureau of Customs earlier this week prevented the release to 6,480 foot-octagon of kinded with Snickers chocolate bars.

Asuncion said that chocolates distributed by Mars had been cleared by the governments of Hong Kong, Thailand, Taiwan, Korea and Malaysia.

Mars Inc. is also the local distributor of M&Ms and Dove chocolate bar.

Jaime Paguirigan, Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service director, said the CIIS had taken custody of the chocolate bars for testing by the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD).

Paguirigan said his office would immediately release the P1 million worth of shipment as soon as the BFAD issue out with findings that the chocolate bars were free of melamine.

HEALTH SECRETARY Francisco Duque III scraps up powdered milk at a warehouse in Barangay Bara, Baliwasan in Quezon City.

HEALTH SECRETARY Francisco Duque III shows powdered milk seized during a raid at an unlicensed warehouse on Friday in Quezon City. Authorities seized thousands of imported powdered milk for testing for possible melamine content.

2 positive for melamine

From page A-1

According to Duque, melamine is harmless if consumed over a long period of time.

"It will damage the kidneys [because] the chemical is poorly soluble and has the tendency to accumulate in the kidneys," Duque said.

The BFAD declared 20 other products, including popular milk and chocolate brands, free of the melamine chemical.

Melamine is a chemical used in making plastics which was found to have been added to watered-down milk made in China and blamed for the deaths of four babies and the illness of more than 50,000 others.

38 products tested

"Of the 30 products we have tested, at least two were found to be positive for melamine. These are Cowabrand Yili Fresh Milk and Mengniu Drink," Duque said.

He said consumers could resume buying the 28 products cleared of melamine but that the ban on all China-made milk and milk product remained as testing of other samples was still going on.

BFAD director Lenelie Contreras said the 28 products cleared of melamine could soon be brought back to the shelves of stores.

"Those who patronize these products should no longer worry," she said.

Referring to Yili and Mengniu, Contreras said, "Eventually, I think these brands are not that popular here. They are all in Chinese characters and they are probably not registered (with) us."

Milk factory raided

There are still 200 products in the BFAD laboratory for testing and the awaiting on retailers to take banned items off their shelves soon, health officials say.

The Department of Health has filed cases against the firm Lacta Metro Trac Superchain between Cainta, Rizal and Pasig City after inspectors found a China-made milk product being sold there. BFAD legal information and compliance division chief Emilio Pulig Jr. said.

The DOH yesterday also raided a milk factory in Baliwasan, Quezon City where inspectors found repacked milk products which do not name the country of origin, also a violation of the ban., Pulig told the Inquirer.

Gutierrez said the samples of Yili and Mengniu that BFAD inspectors had collected and tested positive for melamine appeared to have been smuggled since the items packs only had Chinese characters. The BFAD inspectors registered imported products to have English translations on their labels.

The problem is, aside from these alleged, is smuggled stocks, there are also legally imported Yili and Mengniu milk products that are registered with the BFAD, Pulig said.

Still untested

These presently registered Yili and Mengniu items have not been tested, although the BFAD already has samples of these items for testing, BFAD Laboratory officer in charge Maria Lourdes Santiago said.

Duque said, "It is highly likely [that they (Yeshi) the allegedly smuggled and legitimate products] came from the same source. We will continue to validate the findings."

The BFAD last week released a list of 54 products for testing. A number of products on the list of 28 released yesterday were not on the original list of 54.

These are on the original list and were not previously monitored by the BFAD as products to be tested included variants of popular milk brand Mido as well as Bear Brand.

"We are prioritizing infant formula products, those which are for babies," Santiago explained, when asked how they determined the order of products to be tested.

She said the BFAD tested products based on the sequence they were brought to the laboratory. Private companies cannot lobby for their products to be tested first, she said.

Private milk companies can choose to have their products tested by 14 accredited laboratories in the country, of which only two have the capacity to test for melamine, Santiago said.

The findings still have to be validated by BFAD, she added.

"We are doing our best to release the results as fast as we can," Contreras said. She promised to release test results of another batch of 28 products on Tuesday.

Top priority

Duque said that because of the limited capacity of the BFAD laboratory, milk and milk products from China will be priority though boosting.

Aforesaid, other products from China can also be tested for melamine, Duque said. He was reacting to television reports quoting a private laboratory as saying it had found melamine in eight products from China, including a popular bourbon cream brand.

Duque said the private laboratory which conducted the test "is not accredited" by the BFAD.

"It still needs to be audited by BFAD," Duque said. He alleged that the reference standard the private laboratory had used to detect melamine was questionable.

Duque said that to avoid confusing the public, private laboratories should submit any findings in connection with the ban on China-made products to the BFAD for validation.

Duque also ordered an investigation of allegations that some local importers were repacking banned milk products from China and putting new labels on them to make it appear that these came from New Zealand.

Ties with China

Malacañang yesterday said the government decision to ban China-made milk and dairy products would not damage Philippine-China relations.

Press Secretary Jesus Dureza said reporters, "China and the Philippines have close diplomatic and trade relations, and [more like this, I'm sure, will not get in the way of continuing warm relations between the two countries."

Referring to the actions taken by the BFAD, which is under the supervision of the DOH, Dureza said the government would rather "overreact than underreact because it's [a] matter of life."

He said the BFAD was doing everything within its mandate "to protect consumers from any harmful substance ... whether Chinese milk or any other substance."

Referring to reports that BFAD was understaffed, Dureza said: "That's the reality. We did not anticipate this issue to crop up, so we are operating with [only] the personnel [and] the kind of products to be tested. Let's be patient because best efforts are being exerted considering the emergency situation."

No melamine

FOLLOWING IS THE LIST OF 28 MILK and milk products released yesterday by health authorities which were found negative for melamine:

1. Anchor Lite Milk
2. Anlene High Calcium Low Fat Milk (HT [reconstituted])
3. Bear Brand Instant
4. Chuckee Milk Chocolate
5. Forebrand Skim Milk
6. Jolabi Drink
7. Jolly Cow Pure Fresh Milk
8. Kiddie Soya Milk Egg Delight
9. Lactogen 1 Drink Infant Formula
10. M&M Milk Chocolate Candies
11. M&M's Peanut Chocolate Candies
12. Milk Boy
13. Nestogen 2 CHA Follow-up Formula
14. Nestogen 3 CHA Follow-up Formula
15. Nido Fortified with DHA
16. Nido Full Cream Milk Powder
17. Nido Junior
18. No-Sugar Chocolate of Instantbeverage Chocolate [Cocoa Butter Substitute]
19. Nutri-Express Milk Drink
20. Pura 2HF Fresh Milk
21. Snickers French Roasted in Caramel
22. Soft Nougat in Thick Milk Chocolate
23. Wheels Soya Bean Milk
24. Wilkaha Orange
25. Wilkaha Yellow
26. Yakult Plain Milk Drink (Pasteurized)
27. Universal Skim Milk Powder
28. Yoko Milk Peanut
29. Yogurt Yoghurt Flavor Milk Drink

Milk and milk products found positive for melamine are

- Greenfield Yili Fresh Milk (labels have Chinese character)
- Mengniu Drink (labels have Chinese character)

GSIS lawyer shrugs off raps

By Michelle V. Ramos

ESTRELLA ELAMPARO, GSIS' legal counsel of the Government Service Insurance System, has downplayed a petition for her to be sanctioned by the Supreme Court for allegedly violating the code of professional and ethical lawyers.

"Basically baseless," Elamparo said in a statement in reaction to the petition filed by a certain Alan Pegala, also a lawyer.

Elamparo, together with another GSIS counsel, is accused of violating the Code of Professional Responsibility which sets ethical guidelines for lawyers, for having personally submitted to a Court of Appeals justice a GSIS motion concerning the Meralco case.

Pegala, who claims to have filed the petition as a taxpayer and as a lawyer, said personally submitting a motion to a justice who is assigned to hear the case was unethical and was a manifestation of unprofessionalism. Elamparo and his colleagues, Orlando Pelicano, should therefore be sanctioned by the Supreme Court.

In response, Elamparo said Pegala was currently offloading an old issue. Elamparo said a panel created by the high court has already cleared her earlier of allegations of unprofessionalism.

Elamparo stressed the tables on Pegala, saying that he is actually the one who's unprofessional. Elamparo said Pegala, a former counsel of former President Joseph Estrada, was suspended by the Supreme Court since 2003 for violating the lawyers' Code of Professional Responsibility. His suspension sentence is a separate case.

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Wall Street wore nothing but false pretenses

From page A1

But beholders as they are to those who pay them, they agreed to many unbelievable terms which, if such terms were attached to emerging market products, would fetch commensurate grade ratings. Now only do we hear of "toxic" loans that are backed by no income, no job and no assets packaged as well as to fetch triple A ratings.

Second and just as important is the double standard and hypocritical approach that the US Fed has been adopting all these years. They advocate free market economics, but there was the narcissistic Greenspan suppressing interest rates for so long, even when times called for some tightening and correction. What that created was a monstrous financial bubble that was blown up by the cheap/low interest rates would forever stay low in the United States.

Greenspan erased from the minds of global banks the risk perception that the American economy can also be vulnerable. This created seemingly stable greed and excesses on Wall Street and other allied markets such as the London Interbank. Interestingly or coincidentally, Greenspan made it easy for breadusers in the investment banking world to keep coming up with more and more exotics to satisfy the insatiable thirst for bigger profits and capital gains. Moderation low in glimmers. It was a virtue left only to the most prudent to exercise in near isolation. So, where are they, Greenspan? Why are you so painfully quiet now ...?

I saw how this greed was eating up governments, including ours. Tough as it is to prove, there is a probability that some government institutions may have been "duped" into buying toxic exotics, just because they were made to feel "super groups" doing it. Believe me, there was so much ego, seeing and diving, and silliness that went into the decision-making process of acquiring these exotics.

Third is the long denial of Americans and Europeans that the bubbles were bursting. When the subprime crisis started to prick the bubble bath in August 2007, many large fund managers told down Asia instead of unloading Wall Street stocks, when Asian fundamentals looked so much better. No one dared to say there was nothing to be gained from hanging on to many US stocks but they're accused of sounding stupid by the Emperor who was starting to look more and more naked by the day. Many of those fund managers are now paying the heavy price, with the massive wealth destruction we are now seeing and tens of thousands of jobs being lost on Wall Street.

It might be true, therefore, that the United States may go into a depression and some months of disinflation before it finally recovers. My only wish is for open and disruptive anti-racists to go watch the dismantling of Wall Street and the massive correction in the global system, so we may begin to witness an era of greater stability and solid wealth creation. Wishful thinking as it may seem, we all got to start somewhere.

Moving forward, putting good money after bad like a massive bailout will mean doubling the damage. The problem is so widespread and does not involve just a few banks. A bailout is to avoid a systemic risk. What the United States has is more than systemic; it's fundamental. The solution, therefore, needed to be surgical, painful as it is, but the guilty should suffer, and I am not referring to the taxpayers.

Here at home, we were lucky to have had the Asian crisis earlier—a blessing to discguise that brought relatively and grounded our financial markets, save for a handful. But there's no telling whether the contagion will take us by surprise just one careful. There is a great need for transparency, provisioning and vigilance. If certain values need to be closed just like Makatchi did in Malaysia back in the 1990s, so be it, because a communicated solution to a global problem is to go insular in order to protect our systems.

Our economy will remain resilient and hedged with remittances and upcoming Janrie in oil and condom. Needless to say, we can't just glues all our bets solely on our OFWs. That would be unfair. We all have to be part of the solution. Stay calm and take stock of what's good for the soul. It's our best weapon during these very turbulent times.

Going back to where I started, what brought this problem to the United States was the loss of things most important: frugality and intellectual honesty.

(The author is former managing director of UBS Securities Philippines Inc. and Citibank Securities Philippines Inc. He was also former chief operating officer of ABN-Amro Securities Philippines Inc. He also served as presidential consultant on investor relations of the Arroyo administration.)

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PNP promotion now tied ...

From page A1

In a press conference in Camp Crame yesterday, PNP Chief Director General Jesus Verzosa said the waistline size and the body mass index (BMI) would also be considered in the promotion of ranking officers.

The BMI is computed by dividing a person's weight (in kilograms) by the square of his/her height (in meters).

Based on the US National Institute of Health, a normal BMI is between 18 and 24.9. A BMI of 25 to 29.9 is considered overweight; 30 to 34.9 is mildly obese; 35 to 39.9 is moderately obese; and a BMI of 40 and above is severely obese.

Verzosa said the Directorate for Human Resources and Doctrine Development (DHRDD) already has a study on the physical fitness of officers based on waist line size and the BMI.

If an officer is physically fit, he is more effective in police operations, he said.

Good gauge

"What we are contemplating in the placement of key positions are certain standards of physical fitness. We want to see how long it would take an officer to climb the stairs of a 10-story building ... that would be a good gauge," said Verzosa, who says every day.

He said the PNP would not impose a sensitive policy for officers in land bases close to the year, although he encouraged all officers to be "physically fit."

"We encourage our personnel to be physically fit. Even if they are a little bulky, they should be physically fit," Verzosa said.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, during his term as PNP Chief, imposed a 34-inch waistline policy for all officers.

Stricter promotions

PNP spokesperson Chief Supt. Nicanor Bartolome said the Senior Officer Placements and Promotions Board (SOPPB) would also use the results of the officer's last two physical tests as a gauge of his physical fitness.

"With the new qualification promoted by the PNP Chief, things will be stricter in terms of making promotions. Being able to climb 30 flights of stairs will be a premium in selecting officers for sensitive positions," Bartolome said.

The PNP physical test is conducted twice a year and is only a "periodic determination of the physical capability" of an officer, he said. "It will only show how fit you are as an officer. It's part of your record."

The results of the physical test will also determine if an officer is a candidate for attendance (here the PNP An officer found out to) proper physical shape four straight times by PNP doctors would be separated from the service.

Seven minutes

Earlier, two police officers died after instituting on taking physical tests despite being in poor physical condition for fear of being separated from the force.

Included in the physical exams are drops, pushups and a one-kilometer run. For officers 50 years old and above, Bartolome said the standard time for the run is seven minutes.

Verzosa said while the PNP did not have a 10-story building, they would simulate a run that approximating the climb.

Gov't declares 2 mining areas unfit for settlement

By TJ Burgonio

TWO FARMING VILLAGES IN CAMPOSTELA Valley hit by landslides that left more than 20 dead last month are disaster traps and are unfit for human settlement, geologists said yesterday.

Geologists from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau recommended to the local government to declare Barangays Masara and Mainit in Mayo town as "unsafe and unsuitable for human settlement."

Citing their findings, MGB research specialist Noel Argamino said that the villages are covered by steep slopes that make them very susceptible to landslides during heavy rain.

The soil surface in Masara is pyroclastic or lahar-like, and loose, prone to landslide. The narrow alluvial plain of Masara River, which traverses the two villages, is not suitable for residential land use, he said.

"The area is a natural trap in the event of landslides and flashfloods, making it very difficult for people to run to safer grounds when disaster strikes," he said in reassurance.

After days of rain, landslides hit Masara and Mainit on Sept. 6 and 7 burying homes and residents, leaving 26 dead, and scores of others buried missing.

Environment Secretary Lito Atienza deployed teams from MGB to the area to look into the causes of the landslides.

Prior to the landslides, the MGB in Region 11 issued two warnings to local officials in Mayo to relocate the residents in the villages because of the "impending danger of landslides and flashfloods."

It issued the first warning as early as September last year in the aftermath of a landslide in Oyoh Elementary, Masara that left five people dead. This was followed by warning in March this year.

434 aliens turned away at airports

A TOTAL OF 434 UNDESIRABLE ALIENS were barred from entering the country from January to August this year as a result of the bureau of immigration's (BI) vigilance and tighter screening of passengers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA).

In a press statement, Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan said Chinese nationals topped the list of undesirable aliens prohibited from entering the country with 71 followed by 68 Koreans, 63 Nigerians, 37 Taiwanese, 30 Japanese, 29 Americans, and 20 Indians.

"Most of the foreigners who were turned back during the eight-month period tried to enter the country illegally via the premiere airport by presenting spurious travel papers," Libanan said.

"With the tremendous influx of foreign visitors, we, in the bureau, cannot simply relax in entrusting our mandate as chief gatekeepers of the country," he added.

Libanan pointed out that nearly four million foreigners arrived in the country from January to August, compared to the more than 2.6 million who came in the same period last year.

Libanan said a good number of the foreigners who were refused entry in the NAIA are believed to be victims of syndicates using Manila as transit point for their human trafficking operations.

"All of the excluded aliens were also blacklisted and banned from re-entering the Philippines," he added.

The BI chief said it is now difficult for illegal foreigners to slip at the Nias considered as a result of the continuous training of immigration officers who are now more adept in detecting fraudulent travel documents.

He added a team of alert immigration officers called the registration compliance and monitoring group (ARCMG) conducts profiles of suspected aliens and double checks their documents when necessary.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, October 4, 2008
26th Week in Ordinary Time
Memorial of Saint

1st Reading: Job 42:1-3, 5-6, 12-17
Gospel: Lk 10:17-24

The seventy-two disciples returned full of joy. They said, "Lord, even the demons obeyed us when we called on your name." This Jesus replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. You see, I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, rejoice, don't rejoice because the evil spirits submit to you; rejoice rather that your names are written in heaven."

At that time Jesus exclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit and said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them known to the little ones. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. All things have been given all things by my Father; no one yet knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and he to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said to them privately, "Fortunate are you to see what you see, for I tell you, that many prophets and kings would have liked to see what you see but did not, and to hear what you hear but did not hear."

Commentary:

The disciples are sprung from their realization that they could accomplish such wonderful things when they used Jesus' name. Or their new they could do nothing, but with Him their accomplishments were astounding. That joy was greater so they gave credit God the glory and honor that was His due. With His help here we are told to thank God that they could do.

That same spirit must when we express thanks to God for all of the blessings He has bestowed upon us. Gratitude is the sound of joy, for it gives us reason to look grateful and unhappy in the same time.

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Depression offers lessons for today's financial crisis

Friday, October 25, 1929

Tuesday, September 30, 2008

THEN AND NOW Stockbrokers (top) on the New York Stock Exchange on Oct. 25, 1929, one day after "Black Thursday," the first in a series of cataclysmic trade days for the Wall Street Crash of 1929. Traders (above), work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on Tuesday, Sept. 30, one day after the Dow Jones industrial average lost 777 points, its biggest single-day fall ever. AP

NEW YORK—THEY ARE THE stoic Americans found from their grandparents, the pictures they studied in history books—bread lines stretching around street corners, shanytowns sheltering the unemployed, small-town banks with darkened windows.

Today's financial crisis is hardly that grim, though it does share some similarities with the economic collapse of the 1930s—both were punctuated by a housing boom, a long period of cheap credit and a tallying stock market.

But those same similarities may offer some reassurance.

What was then economic calamity is today a history lesson. This time, America has been through it before, and there's a guide, at least for ten tables to be avoided as the nation's leaders try to prevent another catastrophe.

'Still very much with us'

Economists have spent decades dissecting the Great Depression. Their findings influenced the crippling relief but has an economic decision, the tremendous cost of not acting quickly and the risk of damaging the larger economy in efforts to make individuals pay for financially irresponsible investments.

"The number of people with personal memory of the Great Depression is fast shrinking with the years," one noted expert said in 2000. "However, although the Depression was long ago.... its influence is still very much with us."

That expert was Ben Bernanke, a former Princeton University professor and an expert on causes of the Depression. He's now the chair of the Federal Reserve, the US central bank.

Today economists partly blame the Fed for the Depression because it raised interest rates even as the economy was slowing in the late 1920s. Then when banks began to fail, it took a hands-off approach.

Now, they know better

But if those policymakers were able to speak up now, they would offer at least one defense of their actions: How were they supposed to know?

Today's policymakers and lawmakers know better, or at least they should. They've had the benefit of studying not just the Great Depression, but numerous other financial crises, both in the US and abroad.

They also have tighter regulations of financial markets, bank deposit insurance and other policies that were adopted to prevent history from repeating itself.

The current panic has pushed the economy to the edge of a cliff in the Depression, it plunged off.

During the 1930s, stock prices had more than once a period. But on Oct. 28, 1929, the Dow Jones average fell 13 percent in a single day, another 12 percent the next and 16 percent more a few days later.

Stocks bottomed out in 1932—down 80 percent from the peak.

Millions of people lost their jobs. The banking system went into convulsions. About 9,000 banks failed in panics between 1930 and 1933, and hundreds of others were closed by the Roosevelt administration in the first days of his term.

The nation's economic output plunged by a third.

Safety nets in place

Today's economy "is much more developed than we were then. We are many times richer. We have a very good safety net in place. They had none," said Michael Bordo, a professor of economics at Rutgers University who's an expert in financial crises.

There's a danger in citing the Great Depression: some because you don't want to scare people, Bordo said.

President George W. Bush's administration and Bernanke have taken some heat in the past year for reacting to events, rather than moving to prevent problems.

Those actions included the brokering of a deal to shoulder much of the burden for the collapse of Bear Stearns the past spring, but only after the firm had fallen apart.

"It's the bits and pieces of the system have begun to fail, it's clear that the Treasury and the Fed have not engaged in any remote playing. They had not asked the question: What are we going to do if? They waited until the event occurred and then they thought about it," Robert Aliber, a University of Chicago professor emeritus who has written on financial panics, said.

But they changed two weeks ago with the government's decision to bail out insurance giant American International Group, demonstrating a determination to get in front of problems, economists said.

"We are not about to repeat the mistakes of the Great Depression," said Peter Smith, an economic historian at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. AP

'Hockey mom' tops expectations

ST. LOUIS—WITH A WINK AT the camera and a folksy "dog gonnit," Republican vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin on Thursday unveiled a high-powered debate with Democrat Joe Biden to turn the page on a cocky two weeks.

Whether it will make any difference to Republican John McCain's increasingly uphill bid to defeat Democrat Barack Obama in the Nov. 4 election remains to be seen.

Coming into the debate, Alaska governor Palin had been in a tailspin for a couple of weeks after a dream start as McCain's running mate.

She has been lampooned on late-night television and drawn criticism for a CBS News interview in which she struggled to explain such matters as her belief that her state's proximity to Russia made her knowledgeable about Russian affairs.

As the unpredictable were set for the 47-year-old self-styled "hockey mom" for her televised encounter with Biden, a veteran senator from Delaware who is chair of the Senate foreign relations committee.

She wasted little time in trying to reassure with a television audience of tens of millions. She winked at the camera as soon as she stepped on stage and asked Biden if it was okay to call him Joe.

When Biden raised the issue of whether American were better off now than they were when President George W. Bush took office in 2001, Palin accused him of looking backward instead of ahead.

'Say it ain't so, Joe'

"You say it ain't so, Joe. There you go again pointing backwards again, there, you just send your whole comment with the Bush administration. Now diagnose it, let's look ahead and tell Americans what we have planned to do for them in the future," she said.

Snap polls by CBS and CNN said most viewers thought Biden, who rushed his tendency to be verbose and maintained a respectful tone toward Palin, won the debate. But Republicans looking for signs of hope that McCain might be able to reinvigorate his campaign in the polls a month before the election were delighted at her performance.

"The expectations were low and she cleared them with flying colors and she has put Mr. Cole back in the race," said Republican strategist David Reed.

Obama's senior adviser David Axelrod said Palin showed remarkable talent to connect

FALSE What she lacked in substance, the smart-funding, mother-of-five, made up for with her engaging personality.

ing with people in a folksy way—as he had expected.

But Axelrod brought the argument back to who would do better jobs solving the US economy.... Obama or McCain.

"I think it's always nice to get a week, but it's also nice to get a paycheck, and that's what most people are concerned about," he said in the post-debate "spin room" at Washington University.

Democratic strategist Liz Chadderdon said she thought Biden was terrific and would easily be seen as the more presidential, but that Palin also came well-prepared.

"Whoever did her debate prep did a really good job," she said by telephone. "I thought she was good. I think she could've been a bruiser, be worse." Belief at Palin's performance surge through the McCain camp, eager to move Palin past her recent rough times.

Like a car race

Bruce Morrill, professor of mass communications at Arizona State University, seemed to represent the view of many Americans who were eager to tune in to the event, comparing it to watching a professional car race.

"It was like people going to the Indianapolis 500 to see a wreck. I think a lot of people tuned in to see a wreck and there was no wreck," he said.

David Bruce, a political science professor at Pine University in Houston, thought Biden was stronger, although Palin excelled making gaffes.

"She seemed probably quite uncharismatic. But modest point probably was foreign policy where it looked like she was reciting talking points, but I thought she did a good job evening down," he said. Reuters

Folksy, feisty Palin comes out swinging but Biden up in polls

From page A1

to engage the leaders of Iran, North Korea and Cuba.

"That is beyond bad judgment. That is dangerous," Palin said.

The face-off began with Biden saying the best way to gauge Americans' feelings about the failing US financial system and a pending $700-billion federal rescue plan was to go to a community soccer game and ask the parents on the sidelines.

'You hear fear'

"I bet you're going to hear fear," she said, assuring voters that she and McCain were the "mavericks" who could reform the system that allowed the financial crisis to develop.

Palin said "Joe Six-packs and hockey moms across the country" needed to band together to say "never again." Those are both terms Palin has used to describe herself as she has sought to ingratiate herself with middle-class Americans.

As Biden sought repeatedly to convince voters that McCain and Palin had proposed nothing that would change the policies of the Bush administration, Palin said: "Then you go again," harnessing a famous line that former President Ronald Reagan used in his debate with President Jimmy Carter. She challenged Biden to look forward not backward.

With the Republican ticket falling in the polls, Palin was carrying a heavy burden in the back and forth with Biden, a 36-year veteran of the US Senate.

McCain's gamble

McCain took a huge gamble in choosing Palin, whose addition to the ticket initially mobilized the party's conservative base around his candidacy. In the intervening weeks, however, have tempered, once and provincial demeanor have become fodder for late-night television comedians.

Also, in the month since she stepped onto the national stage, the 44-year-old Palin has proved uneven in solo news interviews, showing a lack of experience and breadth of knowledge that would expected in a candidate who would take one to the White House should the 72-year-old McCain win the election, then become inexperienced.

An Associated Press-GfK poll released Wednesday found that just 25 percent of likely voters believe Palin has the right experience to be president. That is down from 46 percent just after the Republican convention, when the Alaska governor made her well-received national political debut. The same survey shows Democrat Barack Obama with a 48 percent to 41 percent lead in voter preference with less than five weeks remaining until Election Day Nov. 4.

It's the economy

Biden opened the debate by blaming the Republican party's handling of the country's economy over the eight years of President George W. Bush's administration, which Biden said would be overshadowed by a Democratic White House.

He also defended the Obama plan to ease taxes of Americans making more than $250,000 annually as a matter of "simple fairness."

"This is not punitive," he said, adding that middle-class Americans deserved tax breaks.

Palin said Obama was promoting a "redistribution of wealth" that would result in fewer jobs and a reduction of tax revenues.

Biden called the Republican Party's plan for revising the American health insurance system the "ultimate bridge to nowhere," referring to the financial boondoggle that was killed in Alaska after first being supported by Palin, as governor.

Global warming

Palin refused to blame global warming on human activity, but conceded the Earth's climate was changing. Biden said the planet was growing warmer because of the burning of carbon dioxide-emitting fuels, and Republicans could not solve the problem because they did not acknowledge its true cause.

Palin stood her ground against a man 21 years her elder and one of the Senate's foreign policy doyens. Biden, loquacious and gaffe-prone, made it through the 90-minute confrontation without stumbling or talking himself into a corner.

Public Broadcasting Service journalist Gwen Ifill moderated the debate at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. She had become part of the pre-debate news coverage because of criticism from some conservatives over a book she is writing, titled "The Breakthrough: Politics and Race in the Age of Obama." Examiners have politics have changed among black Americans since the civil rights era of the 1960s. The journalist says she has not yet written the chapter on Obama and questioned why critics assume it will be favorable toward the Democratic candidate, a first-term Illinois senator. Reuters

Palin has seemed poorly informed in the few interviews she has granted. In a CBS News interview aired Wednesday the apparent unable to cite a US Supreme Court decision with which she disagreed while saying many decisions had divided Americans. The libertarian could not name magazines and newspapers that she reads.

She also has been widely lampooned for using Alaska's proximity to Russia as an example of her foreign policy expertise. Palin has never visited Russia, and until last year she had never traveled outside North America.

McCain and other Republicans criticized such questions as "gotcha journalism," and he defended his running mate in appearances Thursday on several television talk shows.

McCain drops Michigan

Also Thursday, McCain abandoned efforts to win Michigan, a Great Lakes industrial state where he had fought his toughest race.

Republican officials with knowledge of the strategy said McCain was removing staff, curtailing advertising and canceling visits to the battleground state. Resources will be sent to Ohio, Wisconsin, Florida and other competitive states.

Polls show support shifting rapidly to Obama since the first presidential debate on Sept. 26 in Mississippi. Although the candidates discussed the depth of their experience and their foreign policy experiences, it appeared that their comments on the faltering US economy most influenced voters.

Both men, as well as Biden, returned to their home states on Wednesday to cast votes in favor of the much-revised $700-billion bank administration plan to rescue America's failing financial system. The measure, rejected Monday by the House of Representatives, was expected to go to the floor a second time, perhaps on Friday. The first House vote sent the stock market into a 778-point nose dive, the largest one-day point drop in history. AP

Bailout passage seen on wave of converts

WASHINGTON—A WAVE OF converts from the House of Representatives jumped aboard the $700-billion rescue package on the eve of a make-or-break second vote, as lawmakers responded to an awakening among voters in the pain ahead of them if stability is not restored to the teetering economy.

Republican and Democrat aides said appeals from credit-starved small businessmen and the Senate's addition of $110 billion in tax breaks had persuaded them to drop their opposition.

Democratic Majority Leader Steny Hoyer said the House would vote on the reworked bill Friday morning. The debate was to start at 9 a.m., Washington time (or 9 o'clock last night, Manila time).

It was still unclear, though, whether lawmakers would have the down or up support needed to pass the measure.

One thing was unmistakable: the economy is in trouble. The Labor Department reported Friday that employers slashed payrolls by 159,000 in September, the most in more than five years. The figures also show that many more people left the labor force for early retirement.

"I am hopeful there will be bipartisan majority support for this bill that is critical to stabilizing our nation's economy for all working Americans," Hoyer said.

But global stocks sank heavily as some lawmakers continued to make known their opposition to using vast amounts of taxpayer money to bail out Wall Street firms. (See related story on this page.)

Despite the bailout plan being resoundingly passed by the Senate on Wednesday night, investors are still worried that the House will reject it—as it did on Monday, sending world markets into a tailspin.

Obama, McCain appeal

Fears about an economic downturn that could wipe out the Americans' ability to borrow, plunder their savings and put them out of work were the three factors industrials down nearly 800 points Thursday, three days after Monday's historic 778-point drop.

The Federal Reserve reported record emergency lending to banks and investment firms, fresh evidence of the credit troubles squeezing the country.

Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama and his Republican rival, John McCain, phoned reluctant lawmakers for their help.

Democratic Rep. John Lewis said he would support the bill after speaking with Obama about it. Other wavering lawmakers said Obama's statements had swayed them in early.

Congressional leaders worked over weekend colleagues whatever they could find them.

Bush warning

President George W. Bush joined the groundswell of pressure, urging the House to follow the Senate's lead and approve the massive rescue package, warning "people's jobs are in jeopardy."

"This issue has gone way beyond Wall Street and Wall Street. This is an issue that is affecting hard-working people," Bush said in his 14th appeal to the past 15 days to lawmakers.

Bush argued that the huge rescue measure was the best chance to calm unnerved financial markets and ease the credit crunch.

Minds were changing in both parties in favor of the multibillion-dollar measure, which would let the government spend billions of dollars to buy bad mortgage-related securities and other devalued assets from troubled financial institutions.

If the plan works, advocates say, that would allow frozen credit to begin flowing again and prevent a serious recession. —Reports from AP, Reuters and AFP

Philamlife up for sale . . .

From page A1

Cainta said, "We will remain focused on daily execution of our business and continue to provide our policyholders and clients with the highest levels of service."

AIG announced in New York its intention to restructure operations in order to emerge as a "smaller but more nimble" company that is solidly profitable and has good long-term growth prospects.

The group has appointed The Blackstone Group and JP Morgan as its global coordinators for the divestiture process.

"Philamlife, the largest and most profitable insurance company in the country and the undisputed market leader for over 60 years, is a crown jewel for AIG and will surely attract local and international interest," Philamlife said in its statement.

P170-B assets

The Yuchengco Group Pacific Life Assurance Corp. (Grepalife) and Malaysian Insurance Co., Inc. earlier announced plans to consolidate to pool resources to make a bid for Philamlife, which has consolidated assets of P170 billion, or more than their combined investments.

Philamlife's life insurance business alone has a net worth of P11.4 billion as of end-2007.

Aside from its insurance, AIG has interests in non-life insurance, banking, mutual funds and private-equity businesses in the Philippines.

AIG Philippines is the ninth biggest life insurer in terms of net worth (P5.65 billion), while Malaysian Insurance is the biggest in terms of both assets (P11.15 billion) and net worth (P4 billion) among non-life insurers.

Other suitors

Cainta earlier said that aside from the Yuchengcos, there were other groups which had expressed interest to Philamlife.

In New York, AIG said Friday it planned to sell off a number of business units to pay off its massive government loan, while retaining its US property and casualty and foreign general insurance businesses.

AIG also said it planned to retain an ownership interest in its foreign life insurance operations.

AIG's traditional insurance subsidiaries have widely been viewed as safe and are likely to attract buyers. The New York-based insurer said it had already been contacted by a number of suitors.

One unit that analysts have said could be sold is the International Lease Finance Corp., which leases out more than 900 aircraft with asset values topping $44 billion at the end of the second quarter.

Brink of failure

Other businesses AIG operates include life, commercial auto and accident and health insurers.

On the brink of failure last month, AIG was bailed out when the US government offered it a two-year $85 billion loan to avoid bankruptcy during one of the most intensive stress tests on the ongoing credit crisis that saw Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc. file for bankruptcy protection and the sale of Merrill Lynch & Co. to Bank of America Corp.

To return to the loans, the US government received warrants to purchase up to 79.9 percent of AIG.

Raising funds

As of Sept. 30, AIG had drawn $61 billion on the credit facility.

Shortly after AIG struck its deal with the US financial regulators, which led to the government bailout.

AIG said it was actively working on alternatives for its financial products business and its securities lending programs.

Last week, billionaire investor Warren Buffett said his firm, Berkshire Hathaway Inc., would be interested in acquiring a couple of AIG's assets depending on what the company was willing to sell. With a report from AP

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INVITATION TO BID
FOR THE SALE OF USED GENERATORS, VEHICLES, MACHINE EQUIPMENT, OFFICE FURNITURES AND FIXTURES ETC.

The Securities and Exchange Commission, through its Interim Liquidator, invites qualified datasheetbuyers and is bid for the equipments, furniture, and vehicles on a "AS-IS-WHERE-IS" basis.

The said items may be inspected during office hours, Monday to Friday October 13-17, 2008 at No. 17 Sinclair Road, South Forbes Park, Makati City.

Complete documents may be obtained at the Office of the Chairperson, 8th Floor, SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) starting October 13 to 17, 2008 from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. For further details, please call at tel. no. 726-0931.

Pre-Bid Conference will be on October 15, 2008 at 10:00 A.M. at the SEC Conference Room, 8th Floor, SEC Building.

Deadline for submission of bids shall be on October 20, 2008, 10:00 A.M. at the Office of the Chairperson, 8th Floor, SEC Building and immediately thereafter bids shall be opened at the 9th Floor, SEC Conference Room, 9th Floor, SEC Building.

The Securities and Exchange Commission reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formalities therein and to award the Sale to a bidder whose proposal is evaluated to most advantageous to the Commission.

The SEC may exercise its obligation whatsoever in accompanied necessary, any bidder for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of their bids, or for any injunctions that may result within the sale of it.

September 30, 2008

(Sgd.) Atty. Michael O. Rosales
Interim Liquidator

(Sgd.) Manuel C. Bolino, Jr.
Interim Liquidator

PHILIPPINE SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL SOUTH MINDANAO CAMPUS
Sto. Niño, Tugbok District, Davao City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PHILIPPINE SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL SOUTH MINDANAO CAMPUS (PSHS-SMC), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following projects:

Package I	Construction of Laboratory Building – Phase I
Package II	Construction of Dormitory Phase I with Utilities
Package III	Construction of Outdoor Basketball Courts, Construction of Modified Tennis Court, Construction of Modified Volleyball Court, Construction of Jogging Path and Landscaping, Earthworks/Improvement of Area Around the Gymnasium
Package IV	Construction of Multi-Purpose Gymnasium
Package V	Construction of Cafeteria/Audio-Visual Room and Multi-Purpose Gymnasium

Location: Philippine Science High School Southern Mindanao Campus, Sto. Niño, Tugbok District, Davao City

Source of funding: FY 2008 Continuing Appropriations of P 1.000 Billion
Approved Budget for the Contract:

Package I	P 9,740,000.00
Package II	P 19,740,000.00
Package III	P 4,740,000.00
Package IV	P 3,240,000.00
Package V	P 2,240,000.00

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the contract it intends to undertake, a contractor's license of at least 50% of the ABC for the respective category, and the necessary equipment and key personnel to perform the contract. The PCAB license and registration for the contractor must be current and valid. Non-submission of the above documents will result in the rejection of the bid.

All participants will be subjected to Eligibility Screening and Evaluation of Contractor's Performance Capability. Pre-Qualification, Bid Conference, Post-Qualification and Bid Evaluation shall be governed by the provisions of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of RA 9184.

The schedule of activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedules
1. Release of pre-qualification documents, letters of intent, including submission of eligibility	October 7 – 15, 2008
2. Evaluation of Eligibility Papers	October 16 – 17, 2008
3. Eligibility Results/Notification of Eligible Bidders	October 18 – 19, 2008
4. Distribution of bid documents	October 20 – 21, 2008
5. Pre-bid conference	October 22, 2008 – 8:00 AM
6. Receipt and Opening of Bids	November 7, 2008 – 10:00 AM

The Eligibility Papers and the Invitation to Bid (Instructions to Bidders, Philippine Bidding Documents, Bid Bulletin Number, Minutes, Bidding Forms, Bid Form, Bid Data Sheet, Bid Security Requirements, Bid Evaluation Report, Post-Qualification Report, Notice of Award, Contract Agreement, Bid Securing Declaration, Bid Documents, Bid Bulletin

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OPINION

Chameleon

EDITORIAL

IT'S PROBABLY TOO LATE NOW TO STOP CONGRESS from passing the bill compelling media organizations to air the side of anyone who has been criticized or accused of wrongdoing. The Senate version of the bill, principally authored by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago, is scheduled for floor debates anytime soon in the House of Representatives.

The twin measures would require media organizations to publish or broadcast the reply of anyone who has been accused of committing any crime or who has been criticized "by innuendo, suggestion or rumor for any lapses in behavior." In the House version, the reply must be aired not later than one day after delivery, while the Senate version gives a three-day deadline. And it would not be enough to print or broadcast the reply. It has to be of the same length as the offending article and it must be published on the same space. Failure to comply would merit fines ranging from P10,000 to P50,000 to the Personnel bill, while in Pocumovelli's version the fine could go up to P200,000; offenders could be jailed for a period of up 30 days and the publication or broadcast station could be shut down for a month.

The authors and supporters of the bill cite the need for "fair play" and "equal treatment" to justify the measure. And while Pocumovelli complains that he has been "victimized" by "unscrupulous people [who] use newspapers to malign others," Personnel has said his bill is "not an infringement of the freedom of the press" but an "expansion of that right." Personnel said publishing or airing the side of aggrieved parties would even strengthen the media's credibility and protect journalists by eliminating a source of grievance that has led some powerful individuals to file libel suits or hire criminals to harass or kill "disturbing journalists."

The bill is, in fact, a poisoned chalice which cannot even pass the practicality test. Consider, for instance, a situation where a newspaper has published an article deemed derogatory by a senator. If the story earned a banner headline, then his reply, once delivered, has to be the banner, too, and not even a nuclear explosion in Metro Manila can nudge it away from the most prominent space on the front page. Or consider a columnist who is outrageously accused of President Macapagal-Arroyo: under this bill he must yield his space (and forfeit his pay) every time she feels like taking issue with what he has written about her. And a letter to the editor will take the place of an editorial when a newspaper criticizes a government official.

What the bill will do is to turn a newspaper that tries its job seriously into a journalistic chameleon: watching one day, and lapdog the next day, a critical organ one day and an administration sycophant the next day. How is that for credibility?

If forcing media organizations to publish everybody's own version of a story that put them in a bad light is supposed to help enhance their credibility, the media can do without the help. Journalists don't need to be reminded that credibility is essential to any news organization's survival. But substituting legal diktat for independent news judgment won't enhance the credibility of any news organization. It just curtails a news organization's right to exercise editorial judgment and discretion and it will ultimately kill press freedom.

With Congress dead set on censoring this fresh assault on the media's independence and freedom, all that the press can do is trust the Supreme Court to rush to its defense when the time comes. It would be useless to ask the President to veto the bill since it is sure to her desk. Proclamation 1017, which the police and military used as an excuse to shut down one newspaper, should indicate where her sympathies lie as regards this piece of legislation. After all, this is an administration that didn't think twice about handcuffing and detaining journalists for the "crime" of covering the standoff at Peninsula Manila.

The press is likely to have better luck with the Supreme Court. The Constitution clearly says: "No law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression or of the press." Following dictation is not an exercise of freedom.

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Credit culture

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

THE CRISIS THAT HAS PUSHED THE American financial system to the brink of disaster is spawning its own moral economy. The new object of fixation is blame-worthiness, rather than creditworthiness.

The high-flying executives on Wall Street who nurtured those ingenious financial instruments known as "derivatives" are being singled out for special flogging. But not long ago, they were the celebrated and highly compensated geniuses of the US economy. Today, there is not a corner in hell that seems punitive enough for them, no penalty that can conceivably equal the magnitude of their greed and recklessness.

But this blame game is obviously a futile exercise. It's like blaming others for the way people age. It may be morally gratifying, and perhaps even politically serviceable. But it brings Americans no closer to understanding the complexity of their highly leveraged economy. Credit is not just the lifeblood of the US economy; it is its heart and soul. It is the only way Americans do business. In such an economy, one's credit record is all that is needed to open doors; it is the center of gravity of one's identity in the larger society.

A foreigner visiting the United States for the first time will not fail to note the centrality of credit in everyday transactions. Hardly anyone pays with cash, except for the smallest purchases. If someone forks out a hundred dollar bill to pay for a cup of coffee, as Filipino tourists are sometimes wont to do, the cashier will likely take a second look at him and at his money. In this economy, the use of a credit card or even a checkbook is the most natural thing in the world. It is the normal thing in the world.

In hierarchical Philippine society, we measure a person's worth by his family background, his educational attainment, his profession, his connections, and visible wealth. In the United States, a person's worth is roughly equivalent to what he can borrow from a bank, or how much he can buy on credit. It is one's credit standing that matters; it is the measure of almost everything else that is regarded as valuable. It attests to a person's capacity to pay back, which is all that is important. If one habitually pays with cash, there is no way he can build a credit history, the most important basis of economic identity and one's principal claim to citizenship in the market.

Credit cards and housing loans are the two most important indices of the average American's economic standing. It is fairly easy to get a credit card, but also quite easy to lose it if you do not meet the minimum monthly payments. But housing loans used to be different—a steady and adequate income was required to secure them. It wasn't until the early 1990s that the dream of owning a house became possible for almost every American family, notably for those whose incomes did not normally qualify them for such loans. This were called subprime mortgages loans. They were hailed as democratic, rather than devious, equitable rather than exploitative.

It was the time of the economic bubble. Banks and other financial institutions were awash with money that needed to make more money. And so they started giving out loans with little regard for the value of the housing paid for. They were focused on interest payments. Borrowers who were enticed with initially low interest payments found themselves trapped in schemes that carried adjustable interest rates and high penalties for pre-payment. But the housing boom kept on. Everyone got in through the roof and gave homeowners the assurance that what they were paying out was more than offset by the rising market value of their homes.

It is an aspect of this investment-mad version of finance capitalism that when the subprime housing mortgages began to run sour, the investment houses, instead of being sanctioned, bundled these mortgages with credit card debts and sold them as mortgaged-back securities. There was a time when responsible borrowers, still the majority, were seduced with offers so as to finance their mortgages. The recent borrowing mess money against the equity they already had, money they could use to upgrade to a bigger home, or to buy a new car or go on an expensive holiday. These were offers that most were good to ignore, and they were perfectly considered still the easier logic of the financial trap of life.

I remember how my US-based sister and their husbands carefully calculated the benefits of having money to invest in the Philippines against the risks of refinancing under new adjustable repayment terms. They were not alone. Many Filipinos took the money and invested in real estate in the Philippines, instead of saving into a bigger home or buying an additional car. But many others were not as conservative. The more seems they had to borrowed money, the freer their spending habits became. Surely, they must accept some blame, and they are paying for it. But it's no consolation to their family. They are often all only a small part of a system that has created a reality so complex that it spins one contingent risks after another, rendering its self-debilitating operations totally unclear. It is not amazing time.

The good thing that can be said of all this for us in the Philippines is that it will finally put a stop, hopefully permanently, to local banks' aggressive practice of issuing unsolicited credit cards in order to spur credit spending, a consumerist culture driven by credit is the last thing we need in these times.

• • •

Comments to public.lives@gmail.com

Fat perks for officials of losing gov't firm

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

THE MWO PRODUCTION UNIT IS A CORPOration which, although small as government corporations go, exemplifies a dysfunctional government. That I have been writing about its problems on and off for maybe 18 years now, without any effect (including the status quo, as it itself reflective of this culture of the dysfunction.

What are the indicators of dysfunction? For starters, the business of this printing firm have insisted that this is a private corporation—in spite of several opinions to the contrary—and have so far gotten away with it. They have in effect laughed in the face of Gerardo Sicat, former Neda director general and one of the firm's original incorporators, a Department of Justice opinion, and a Commission on Audit opinion, all saying unambiguously that MWO is a government instrumentality.

And they can laugh, because they can scam the opinion of the Ombudsman (at the time, Antonio Bautista) who, either in total disregard or willful ignorance, ruled that it was a private entity in the same breath that the Presidential Management Office apparently also operated under the assumption (not bothering to check) that MWO was a private corporation that was taken over by the government because it was unable to pay its debts (P80 million) to government banks.

And they are still laughing, because although then President Joseph Estrada put the company under the Office of the Press Secretary in 2000 (which should have decided the matter precisely because a government agency cannot subsist as a private corporation), and although the chairman and members of the board are all appointees of the president (by habasa or desir letter), the company since 2000 (the very year it was placed under the press secretary) has refused to submit to COA audit, having private auditors instead. And it apparently has gotten away with it.

Think of it, dear reader. The MWO management has the best of both worlds. When it is convenient for it to act like a government corporation, it does so—as when it gets printing contracts from government agencies (having to bid is privilege given only to a government agency), or when it claims tax- and duty-free status. And when it is convenient for it to claim private corporate status, why, that too can be done—as when it refuses COA audit, when it pays commissions to officers for "selling" his services (all in jobs are for the government), and, perhaps me for being tiresome, they have gotten away with it, and continue to get away with it.

But, the puzzled reader may ask, aren't the board of trustees all presidential appointees? Shouldn't they be protecting the interests of government, if not the taxpayers? Indeed they should—but yet, it was those same presidential appointees who approved the use of a private auditor instead of the COA. The same presidential appointees who allowed company officials (and/or their relatives) to claim commissions that they have no business claiming because printing jobs come MWO was automatically.

Why was the COA dropped? Perhaps it is because it had the temerity not only to point out the anomalies but to recommend that "the officials concerned [be held] liable for the losses incurred ... and refund to the corporation the amounts representing unauthorized, unnecessary and irregular payments of salary commissions."

But if company officials were involved in banks-packs, shouldn't it have been a simple matter for the board of trustees to dismiss them (the erring officials were never removed), based on the COA report?

Why didn't they do so? Ah. This is where the financial statements tell interesting tales: it seems one that even as company officers get "commission" (almost as large as the entire annual salaries of rank and file and file—with the officers' salaries larger than the total for the rank and file) while the COA says they shouldn't get, the trustees have also given themselves (over) large "allowances" (P10,000 monthly for the board chairman, P9,000 monthly for a couple of others, and P8,000 per board meeting. This last is larger than some of the per diems of the largest private corporations in the country. And this, by the way, was given at the time the company was incurring losses.

And here's the kicker: all of the non-known to the press secretary at the time (2003), and no-body's telling. Perhaps the amounts involved are too piddling for anyone to really care, so the company has been treated as walking wounded.

Some people do care, the rank and file workers who have been spending out unsteady after months, hoping against hope that their charges will be heard. Their latest complaint, addressed to current Press Secretary Jesse Mercado, is that while they (generously) get P1,000 per month in rice subsidy (guaranteed

Who's afraid of measuring corruption?

AFTER LAST MONDAY'S INQUIRER EDITORIAL, I heard that an Indonesian diplomat told his PH counterpart, "Blame the global measure—with the price of oil so favorable to us now, what you paid us last year to do worse in the Corruption Index isn't enough anymore." (Joke only.)

The editorial, "Growing in corruption," was also based on the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) ranking behind Indonesia (2.6) for the first time on the Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International. Incidentally, Singapore was at 9.3, Malaysia at 5.1, and Thailand at 3.5.

But what is the significance of a global index for a country's objective of reducing corruption? Is corruption finite into how people think of implementation, i.e., try to be like Singapore, and not like Indonesia or the Philippines.

Actually, global indicators are mainly for audiences like international investors, multilateral banks and foreign aid agencies, whose mandates or interests require them to look at how the global corruption context can lead to a higher Philippine share of the funds of these institutions.

Yet reducing corruption in the Philippines is good in itself, regardless of what happens to Philippine-watching relatives in Indonesia or the global index, and requires the will and resources to do so. Getting foreign funds, if we [and I don't mean only the government] are serious in wanting to reduce it, then we should apply science, and better measurement, to the task. We must adopt means for measuring progress (or regress) in reducing corruption.

In the first place, we must reject the notion that it is impossible to measure corruption. Corruption, people thought that least was not measurable, being only "a feeling." Though things illegal or immoral tend to be hidden, and are more difficult to measure, yet such challenges to the research profession do not impossible to meet. For example, we have been able to survey such matters as using prohibited drugs, participating in theft, having another person's token sex, and having learned into hurting sex.)

Obviously, surveys also measure personal, or up close, experiences of corruption, aside from perceptions, or impressions about it, from afar.

National surveys on corruption are being done in many countries, quite apart from those used for the highly publicized global comparisons. In 2000, Ghana's "Voice of the People" survey got ordinary people's perceptions of corruption and bribery to provide data for policy reforms. In 2008, the Kenyan government did a survey of public perceptions and experiences with key government and legal institutions, such as the anti-corruption commission and the police. In 2005, in Uganda, corruption was part of the agenda of an urban Citizen Voice Barometer Survey done by the Ugandan Womenbusiness' Association. In the Philippines, Social Weather Stations included the subject of corruption in seven surveys of ordinary citizens for a Transparency Accountable Governance project in major metropolitan areas in 2000-2007; the eighth round is underway this year.

Subjective indicators are not inferior to objective ones, if the scoring system and manner of selecting the respondents or evaluators are valid. Sometimes the entire electorate is the best judge—see the quarterly 2005 ratings of public satisfaction with the performance of the national administration in fighting corruption. In the global Transparency indexes still only a few judges, I think they're judging at least their own experience, descriptive shortfall, just as the judges in a boxing match are scored. (I have been the Global Integrity scorer for the Philippines for the past three years.)

Since the government has the primary duty of curbing corruption, it has equal responsibility for applying the scientific method to it. It should not remain where "one month" does. If it finds research of others inquirable, it should commission research on its own specifications. It should fund respectable academic institutions and then use the instrumental process itself.

But if the government is not clear, then private research institutions should start anyway. My suggestion is to focus on a few methods: the right to reproduce at first, as long as they are well conceived, understandable, and defensible. Its duration, which means a communication or combination of the ingredients, is secondary.

What matters most is its constant corruption measurement over time, so that the effects of action programs can be constantly studied. Program interventions used at one point should be related to outcomes at a later point. The measurement should be called in concept yet simple in design so as to be affordable to replicate at least once a year.

One should be aware of foreign methods of measuring corruption, but not slavish to any of them. It is the Filipinos who are the stakeholders in the battle against corruption, and whose concerns should be met, rather than those of the global institutions. Don't worry, for instance, about foreign businessmen's corruption questionnaire because its gender-sensitive, unless the Filipino people insist on this feature in anti-corruption programs.

Do corruption measurement locally even if your person isn't being done internationally. It's shameful to be afraid of being the first country to do it.

* * *

Reference: UNDP and Global Integrity, "A Users Guide To Measuring Corruption," (Supreme Int' 2008, www.undp.org/oslocentre. Contact UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, info.governance.oslo@undp.org.

* * *

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SOCIAL CLIMATE

Mahar Mangahas

Transnational 'bayanihan'

COMMENTARY

Wan G. Saavedra

TUCKED AWAY IN THE QUIET TOWN OF SIBUGAY, Bagumbayan, a few meters away from the first-coastal roads, is Tabuyo National High School (TNHS). From the outside, this public school looks just like any other high school in the Philippines' many far-flung provinces. But look more closely. Tabuyo NHS actually has an air conditioned, state of the art computer lab with Internet connection, made possible with a lot of help from a group of Filipino-Americans in association based in the United States.

Tabuyo NHS is just one example of how Filipino communities abroad work together to dispel the unfair and oftentimes mistaken notion that Filipinos who have migrated abroad have forgotten their roots and have become part of their adopted greener pastures. These days, when the government is increasingly unable to provide adequate social services for their citizens and when the donor market is constantly bombarded with countless requests, organizations engaged in various forms of migration have taken to diaspora philanthropy, a burgeoning concept which involves tapping Filipino diasporas all over the world for causes ranging from health care to education, and even disaster relief.

Diaspora philanthropy has evolved from being one-time, big-time dole-out events—hard with self-congratulatory platitudes—into a genuine, sustainable and credible source of financial and social assistance for developing countries. The World Bank estimates that global philanthropy in 2006 alone reached US$ 95 billion, almost twice the US$ 50 billion official development assistance fund allotted by developed nations for developing countries. The Philippines has received around $208 billion worth of diaspora philanthropy funds.

Diaspora philanthropy undoubtedly made a viable impact in communities of origin. For example, the contribution by overseas Chinese made the regions in Guangdong and Fujian province a food convention and teacher's institution and also. Bangsamoro USA ships books, provides school uniforms and conducts other education-related programs in the Philippines.

Since 2008, the Ayala Foundation USA has served as a channel for charity and gift-giving for US-based donors who want to help address the greatest needs of the Filipino people. Ayala Foundation USA is currently partnered with US-based Filipino-American organizations in education, environment, entrepreneurship, religious and pastoral ministries. It now has 501c3tax exempt groups organized and operating in New York, LA and Washington, D.C., Honolulu, Chicago and Portland to provide philanthropic initiatives in the United States.

Several partners conducting education-related projects have so far used the resources of migrant donors. The University of the Philippines College of Medicine, for example, has greatly benefited from the University of the Philippine Medical Society in America. Donations have so far been used from instituting health centers in poor communities to providing laptops for doctors working in remote provinces.

How can we effectively harness and maximize the potential of diaspora philanthropy? We must consider the myths and realities that Filipino and communities left behind but also that of the diasporic themselves. Diaspora philanthropy isn't just about the Rockefellers or the Fords of the world. It is also about the ordinary factory worker in the United States, the caregiver in Taiwan or the nurse in Italy. It is only when we realize that these migrants live their own unique set of problems being far away from home can we hope to practice genuine "transnational bayanihan" that emphasizes reciprocity and togetherness among all Filipinos, wherever they may be.

Wan G. Saavedra is a senior development associate at the Ayala Foundation USA. For more information, please visit www.ayalausa.org.

Greed to green

COMMENTARY

Steric Acosta

IF THERE IS A SILVER LINING TO THE INCREDIBLY ominous spectre of a global financial meltdown and the far-reaching implications of Great Depression-like scenarios, it should be the opportunity to move from "greed economics" toward a global green economy. Global capitalism as we know it has imploded with the collapse of Lehman Brothers, Bear Stearns, Merrill Lynch and such other giant investment and insurance houses, and the future is frighteningly uncertain.

But if out of this mess the global economy is more decidedly weaned from the financial world's main source of "nectar" and "food"—the movement of money" (value, pay self, do "derivative contracts" and other exotic "interest investments mean in the average citizen?) and shift it to the creation of new, real value—new technologies, innovative materials and industrial products that are decidedly more energy-saving and additive-cost-efficient—then there is hope for economic renewal, and, indeed, a real chance to curb global warming. Jacques Attali, founding president of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, would call it a "Global New Deal."

Countries with powerful reserves—China, Russia and other oil producing countries—could send finance "greener" infrastructure projects, especially in sustainable and renewable energy, in the developing world to be built among others, by leading American companies. Our country [given its] abundant natural resources of solar, geothermal, hydro and biomass potential, could become a net exporter of renewable energy technologies and human investors, anyone Attali, who recently wrote the conclusion book "A Brief History of the Future."

It is time leaders took the longer economic challenge of restoring balance in the longer run to the underlying factors of modesty with the "vagaries of time." The $700 billion bailout of Wall Street is touted by the Bush government as "pivotal for

Main Street jobs and homes." But as several scientists would propound, such a bailout sets—or a bonfire of it—still go a long way in "fueling our future."

Just think what nowadays a hundred billion dollars can do to create distinguished ecosystems, restore biodiversity lost, curb pollution, support technological innovations and renewable energy use, and put in place mitigation measures for climate change—especially in the vulnerable regions of the developing world. Such environmental threats to human health, food security and consumed income in clean water, after all, are inextricably tied to poverty indices and the incapacity of millions around the world to meet basic needs and attain higher standards of living.

The contradictions of global capitalism has led to the crisis of overproduction, or as social critics term would have it, "overconsumption" and "overcapacity"—the build-up of "tremendous productive capacity that confront a population's capacity to consume," given widespread poverty and inequalities around the world that limit purchasing power and the "normal profitability" thereof. The financial economy of unbridled speculation or "squeezing value out of already created value," as sociologist Walden Bello would describe it succinctly, has only exacerbated volatilities in the world economy such as crippling oil and price of gas; and the "bubble economy" added to the risks of the market's vital life-support systems of fresh water, clean air, the seas, forests and land.

In the wake of the largest financial collapse since 1929, the crisis should produce shake-up economic planning and activity toward what environmentalist-eco-efficiency advocates Ian Lee and Andrew Winston refer to as their book "Green to Gold": the lessening of unsustainable and new green technologies at the center of business strategy and governmental policy. The future of humanity surely depends no less on how society embarks on a sustainable track with regard to both energy needs and environmental requirements.

This will require nothing short of lobbing environmental stewardship into corporate culture and the training of businesses. This likewise calls for increased and more effective global governance mechanisms and, yes, international responses. By necessity, governments and civil society actors will have to take larger roles, and what many have been a borderless near-absolute faith in the self-correcting nature of free markets will require serious rethinking.

These interventions will have to come to sort out forms—whether in terms of clear country and regional targets like those of Kyoto, the United Nations Development Goals or the unremarkable and commitments of nation-states and governments to global stewardship instruments like the Kyoto Protocol, among others. The world's economies and the world's 6.5 billion inhabitants cannot be less.

Only then will new social contracts emerge...in a Global New Deal forged, with good economics supplanted by a global green economy that drives long-term growth ... and finds a restored planet.

Steric Acosta was elected forty congressmen of Bukidnon from 1998-2007 and principal author of the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act, he is now a professor at the Asian Institute of Management.

My daily brew

I DRANK MY ENTIRE DAY GRUBBING COFFEE. I COULD LEARNED to appreciate it when I was already in college freshman.

It happened one sunny day in September. I was just my usual cheerful self. I needed something to perk me up. I went to the cafeteria without knowing what to get. I asked for brewed coffee, thinking it would not kill me and that I might even end up liking it. True enough, I did. And coffee became one of the things I cannot live without.

They say that the first time is always the most memorable. I agree. When I drank that precious liquid, I was not yet aware as I took it black, and appreciated the rich roast the bitterness and the gradual ash that it put into my system. I want to say that I was overwhelmed that I was not with me when I order up. I know right there and there that I had found the help I needed to relieve each day.

From cafeteria coffee, I moved on to coffee shops. There was one in front of my school, and it became my second home. I had my daily grande, iced-tie, sweet latte at my favorite coffee shop right before my first class. I would then walk and drive to school, as I studied for upcoming tests or typed my papers. My daily brew started each new day and awakened my senses to every little detail of my college life. It was while sipping coffee that I got to know the special people in my life better. I had timeless moments while drowning the different brands of coffee those and I found. I was sipping my favorite cup for the day when I met one of my best friends. It was while finishing my coffee that I studied relationships.

On bad days it was my coffee that comforted me. To add to the drama, usually it was either too sunny or raining hard on my bad days, as the air-conditioned coffee shop became my refuge.

Usually, I had a friend or two with me, and our coffee drinks were such as unique as we were. Nevertheless, we found solutions to life's issues as we sipped our coffee. I got to wake up calls in the middle of my latte, and interestingly, they helped me get over the out I was in. When I had a cliff, I still prayed to Jesus, the smell of coffee inspired me to concoct the best and feminine appropriate statements.

When I finally submitted my final requirements for graduation, and during those times when I needed to fix some problems I had with the important people in my college life, I was calmly sipping my iced grande non-fat latte. It was not my usual brew, but this my life was also taking a different turn.

My drink may have changed, but it still has the same essence. I just added sex, had it in a transparent cup, and sipped it with a straw. It's the same thing with me. I may have graduated from college, but I'm still the same girl. I just escaped from the time of stress. I do not have anything to think anymore since I already let go of my insecurities, and I now live my life one day at a time. I still enjoy going to coffee shops, this time with friends and sometimes by myself. Coffee still soothes my nerves back to my first sabotage and stay awake amid the time of life. The smell of coffee still lures me to my inner sweetie. But every time I drink coffee back to my first taste of coffee, when I was still an innocent as freshman, waiting for answers to so many questions and apprehensions.

Now as I look forward to the rest of my life, I am not scared, because I know that I still take life as it is, one cup at a time.

Samantha Gail B. Lucas, 22, is a fresh AB Humanities graduate.

YOUNG BLOOD

SamanthaGail B. Lucas

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are challenging or worrying them? Here's a contribution from the twenty-something and below. —Ed.

Standing up

Miguel Augustus Rodriguez Salapantay

"NEVER GIVE UP, NEVER SURRENDER."

I first heard this line back when I was in Grade 4, when the first installment of "Toy Story" came out. And simple as it is, maybe I could have never survived without it. For there have been many times in my life that I thought things were hopeless and almost gave up.

When I was in the Ateneo Basketball Club, but our team never won. That almost got, I was demoted by design four and I had to skip school for 10 days. Every four hours, a nurse would enter my hospital room and take blood samples for testing.

When I was a little older, a cousin hit me on the head with a microphone. I bled profusely and I thought I was going to die.

When we were in Grade 7, everyone who went to Intramural Kingdom for our annual field trip. I had to stay home with a big bump on my head that I got after a classmate pulled me from the top of the locker and my head hit the floor.

More hardships and problems awaited me in high school. To stand the end of my first year, my dad decided to quit on our family. One night, he packed his bags, said goodnight to my sister and me for the last time, and then walked out of the door.

All throughout the four years of high school, I got nauseated at, left and misled. I had to go through each day, trying to prove myself worthy of something. Nothing seemed to go according to plan. No one seemed to understand me—not my classmates, not my mom or sister, not the cast of the family I often found myself alone, thinking about what could or should have happened.

I could've given up. I could've shut of the disciples during the first days after the death of Christ. Like me, they found themselves helpless and beaten and without anybody's support.

Like the disciples, I found refuge to the Lord. I continually prayed and never gave up when things seemed to be optimistic. I never gave up when I felt like I was alone. I never gave up when another day.

Now as a more mature person, I have found meaning in all of those past experiences. I am stronger, wiser and more faithful because of all the challenges I faced and overcame. I stood up and took everything head on, and never ran happy.

I did lose. I did make mistakes. But I gave up to start other ventures. I had despair, and now I have learned to be more careful. I was hit by a microphone, but I survived and learned about compassion. I fell, but I had the courage to stand up and fight. I lost my father, but I gained a sense of responsibility and how to relate the courage and sacrifices of my mother. I had my family fall apart, but I learned to understand it and provided. I had the option of giving up, but I never did.

Today, things are better. I have many friends and I get the respect that I deserve. More importantly, I fight for those who find themselves in the position I was in the past. I think God has sent me to speak out for people whose voices cannot be heard.

Miguel Augustus Rodriguez Salapantay, 19, is a BS Management student at the Ateneo de Manila University.

What for is the covenant?

JUSTICES OF THE COURT OF APPEALS signed last Sept. 14 a "covenant" in which they committed to "repair the damage caused" by the bribery scandal linked to the Hacienda Golf case. They vowed to "prove our detractors wrong ... show them we are not the kind of magistrates we are now perceived to be."

The covenant commits to:

- The creation of a one-stop shop that will handle the filing of cases, payment of docket fees, follow up of cases, etc.
- Electronic raffling of cases
- Revision of the Internal Rules of the Court of Appeals
- Designation of a retired Supreme Court justice as Ombudsman for the Court of Appeals; and
- Case load reduction.

As if a pending court case is like a routine government contract, the justices said, "the one-stop shop is intended to realize the investments by minimizing the number of agencies that a litigant would have to go to in filing and following up a case."

As if machines alone generate public trust, they said, "the raffling of cases will become electronic to make sure that there will be no more manipulation in assigning cases to justices."

As if technical rules are the fountainhead of true justice, they promised that the Internal Rules of the Court of Appeals would be studied and amendments would be proposed.

The question is, why limit the reform only to the Court of Appeals? What about the Sandiganbayan, the Court of Tax Appeals, and the lower courts per capita? Why not apply the Ombudsman reform to all judicial regions of the country?

Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno, with his usual optimism and flavor, stated that "the 'teaching' covenant could be achieved through moral renewal," that "together we shall arise, reinvigorate and emerge victorious, as is your invocation of Gods grace ..."

The problem with mankind, Filipinos as otherwise, is that in times of trouble they invoke God as their refuge even with respect to events and issues that are not of heaven's making.

Moral renewal, yes. But are written technical rules of procedures, computers and television enough to achieve it? Do justices and lawyers live the precepts of moral enlightenment or is their livelihood ruled by greed and pride, lures and externalities, hypocrisy and popularity? That is why, I listen to the following words of the Chief Justice with a grain of salt: "I cannot but concur with you that we need moral renewal in this struggle to Access the Justice. It is but right that the first component of our covenant is moral enhancement. This is a recognition that our legal universe revolves around the axiom of morality."

All right, Mr. Justices. Let's get down to hard and ethical work. Less talk, please. Produce results.

—RAMUEL I. IAMEROS, JR.
Unit 12, Star Arcade, 12 Starr Avenue
Philamlife Village, Las Piñas City

Filipinos still care about the bells of Balangiga

I WISH TO COMMEND RAMON J. MOCCAIO FOR his column "The Bell(s) of Balangiga, a case of amnesia." (Inquirer, 9/29/08) I have read so many articles about the bells, per Section 2 (page 2) to inform me even more.

But contrary to what he wrote at the end of his column, I believe many Filipinos still care about bringing back those bells to Balangiga. I am one of them, despite the colonial education I received in my youth, and the Philippine government's shameless subservience to the American government for the past hundred years and more. I even feel strongly against the genocidal war the American imperialists launched against the Filipino people in 1898.

As long as the likes of Socrates keep on writing about the wars and the bells, more Filipinos will be made aware, remember and care about them.

—JAIME B. FELARTIVA
jaimefelartiva@yahoo.com

Resources not enough to sate one man's greed

THIS IS IN REACTION TO JOSE L. MENCADO's column titled "Tomorrow's hello." (Inquirer, 9/25/08)

Everyone must do his part in taking care of the environment in order to conserve our scarce resources. A growing population is not as much a problem as corruption is, in relation to the world's resources. Indeed, the world has enough resources for everyone's needs but not for one man's greed.

—CHENG O. ALVARO
chengoa@yahoo.com

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Across the NATION

P6B needed to stop Mindanao floods

NEWSBRIEFS

■ LAGUNA

Reward for escapees' arrest

ANONGO inmate, who was among the 19 who escaped from the Biñan municipal jail on Wednesday, surrendered to Biñan police Friday, as reward money for information on the whereabouts of the eight other escapees who remained large has been increased from P100,000 to P500,000.

Biñan police chief Supt. Mateteo Nazar said Jhon Lizardo of Barangay Dela Paz turned himself over to the police at around 12 noon.

The eight other prisoners who remained at large have been identified as Angelo Estrella, Ishakir De Vega, Reymundo Sudio, Umar Ibrahim, Ibrahim Tamsad, Jhone Cribe, Edwin Dela and Rudy Pagkalinawan.

Marlon Cerco, Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ DAVAO DEL SUR

4 die in motorcycle mishaps

FOUR people died in separate road accidents involving motorcycles in Davao del Sur and Davao del Norte on Friday.

Bridget Lewis, Salvador Sur, two motorcycle drivers were killed during a collision in Barangay Lalog at around 5 a.m. They were identified as Ireneo Gilhomo, 44, an employee of the Department of Education, and Domingo Dimo, 53.

Police said Gilhomo was then taking a cargo truck on his way to Digos City when his motorcycle hit that of Dimo.

In Bagumbayan, Panabo City, Ismael Jay Casadia, 17, and her cousin, Faye Vincent Ybañez, 5, died when the motorcycle they were riding on was sideswiped by a bus at around 11 a.m.

Traffic officials said the victims were on their way home from school on a Honda motorcycle driven by Raymarie Apao when they were hitting an oncoming Mindex Express bus.

Elde Aguirre and Thomas Cole, Inquirer Mindanao

■ COTABATO CITY

Arnok kills 2

A MAN suddenly went amuck on Tuesday in Barangay Ulaklak nearby Sultan Kudarat, Sharifa Mastura said, before he died with two members of a family with machetes.

Sandra Sinal also wounded another member of the Balaang family before he was shot dead by a neighbor.

SPO2 Kanto Tabuan, police investigator, said Sinal attacked the Balaang, 48, and his two sons at 2 a.m. Ilas and his son Genosal were killed while another son, Bapor, died en route, he said.

Tabuan said the amok tried to attack other residents, but an unidentified villager stopped him with a handgun.

Edwin G. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao

Man, son held for drugs

A MAN and his son were arrested for possession of illegal drugs in a raid on Friday last week in Pinabacdao, Capiz.

Agents of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency nabbed Sotticio Mancebo, 55, and son Michael Mancebo, 30, of Barangay Talaw, Pinabacdao. They recovered four packets of suspected shabu from the two during entrapment operations in Mancebo's house.

But the elder Mancebo accused the raiding team of planting the shabu. He has pending cases of illegal drug dealing in court, reports said.

Aniya Salina, Inquirer Visayas

■ DAVAO CITY

Bees for livelihood project

THE MINDANAO Business Council (MBC) and the University of the Philippines-Mindanao have started working with a Dutch expert for a bee farming project to provide livelihood to poor communities and to address the deficiency in honey production in the country.

Vicente Lao, MBC president, said Alberto Persoon of the Netherlands, Mentor Experts Program would be tapped on the proper handling and care of Kenyan bees (*Apis mellifera*), which can produce 50 kilos of honey per hive each year.

Rizalina P. Asar, Inquirer Mindanao

■ EVENTS

Negros trade fair

THE 23RD Negros Trade Fair is showcasing a vast array of products made in Negros Occidental at Robinsons Center in Makati City up to Oct. 5.

It coincides with the 30th anniversary of the Association of Negros Producers, its president Mary Ann Delarmente said.

The group was formed in 1980 during the sugar crisis of the 1980s.

Cecil P. Dones, Inquirer Visayas

Bicol trade fair

THE BICOL Trade Fair 2007 at the Regional Center of Old Magsaysay in Naga City started Oct. 2 and will end on Sunday.

Coinciding with the fair is the Kapoy Bikol, an exposition of the best tourist destinations in the region.

Rigoberto Bonifacio Lazaro

CUTABATO CITY—THE MINDANAO RIVER BASIN TASK Force (MRBTF) needs about P6 billion to completely develop flood-prone areas and rehabilitate heavily silted rivers and tributaries in the South, Archbishop Orlando Quevedo said.

Quevedo is chair of the MRBTF, which President Macapagal-Arroyo tasked to end the aftermath of the worst floods that killed five people and displaced nearly 50,000 here and in the nearby provinces of Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat.

At this developed, Mayor Muslim Sema said were the P30 million fund, which Malacañang had pledged to release to at least ease the floods in the city had yet to be traced.

Sema said the "little remaining fund for the clearing of clogged rivers had already been exhausted and hardly reach the rejuvenation of the natural governments to resolve the frequent flash floods."

Engr. Dong Amayenin, city planning and development officer, said the money was to be used for the dredging of the heavily-silted Rio Grande de Mindanao and Tamontaka River.

Amayenin said it has been more than three months since the Arroyo pledged the money but it is still nowhere to be found.

Engr. Usop Ali, director of the Department of Public Works and Highways in Central Mindanao, said that of the P6 billion needed, only P1.5 billion has been received the money yet.

He said this was also the reason clearing the rivers of silts and floating debris had been done.

Ali said when they were using one for the dredging operations are entering funds and money from the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

"We are the supposed recipient [of the P30 million], but we do not know where the money will come from," Ali told the reporters.

Quevedo said the P30-million fund for the dredging and clearing operations was part of the P98 million that Mr. Arroyo pledged for the operations of the task force.

Quevedo said the initial budget could help the task force to move forward even if it needed more than other Mr. Arroyo had pledged.

He said if the government seized the flooding cause, it should allocate at least P6 billion for the MRBTF.

The governor, the police said, was enough to finish all the flood control projects by 2010.

"To completely solve the flood problems in Mindanao, the task force needs about P6 billion to accomplish the task in the next two years," Quevedo said.

He said Malacañang should help to asking Congress to allocate the needed money for the MRBTF. Charlie C. Galvez, *Inquirer Mindanao*

Protesters face raps for interrupting Arroyo speech

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—THE POlice on Thursday filed charges of inciting to sedition and others against five Task Force Hagupit (TFH) members arrested for interrupting President Macapagal-Arroyo's speech at the Masskara Festival in Bacolod City.

Supt. Leo Tinio's Pagsan gan, Bacolod City police deputy director for operations, said they filed charges of inciting to sedition, alarm and scandal and resisting arrest against Hermogilde Padilla, Rosalina Algura, Rodilardo Algura, Noel Estrata Jr. and Gerardo Batalla before the Bacolod City Prosecutor's Office.

The five were among the 20 protesters, including Regina Alyssanya Maldaraque members, who unfurled banners with anti-Arroyo messages just as the President was nearing her speech before 3,000 people at the Bacolod public plaza.

POLICE try to pacify a group of farmers who shouted "Cheat Gloria!" several minutes from where President Macapagal-Arroyo was speaking in Bacolod City

Mrs. Arroyo leads in Negros, said they would face the charges.

Bacolod Bishop Vicente Navarro appealed for the release of the five if the charges against them were only minor saying their families would be affected if they continued to be detained.

Navarro said he was saddened by the show of force of the police and military at the Bacolod public plaza venues, adding that they should have observed maximum tolerance.

But RCBO director Senior Supt. Rosalio Quebras said the decision to release the TFH members would be up to the court.

Quebras said the protesters' actions disgraced Negros Occidental and Bacolod City.

Most of the protesters, including the Bajan members, managed to evade members of the RCBO and the Presidential Security Group after the quick rally.

American forces' stay in Mindanao legal, solons say

ZAMBOANGA CITY—THE STAY OF the American forces in the country, particularly in Mindanao, is legal, according to a counterpart of the Legislative Committee on the Visiting Forces Agreement (LoVFA) of both chambers of Congress.

Lorlie Beraste panel co-chair Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, along with five congressmen, ruled out the accusations that the American forces are building permanent structures and actively joining in military combat operations in some parts of Mindanao.

"American facilities are administrative in nature and not combat in nature," Biazon said reporters here in a press conference after their visit to Fort del Pilar to assess whether American forces are maintaining facilities.

The facilities include evaluation at Camp Aguinaldo in Malagutay village, barque and landing base in Cebu the Edwin Andrews Air Base (EAAB), a port inside the Naval Forces Western Mindanao, a landing facility inside the EAAB and the mine breakwaters of the Amir Specific Operations Task Force Philippines inside the Western Mindanao Command.

The Lorlie started its inquiry around 9 a.m. and ended it at 3 p.m., but Biazon gave the assurance that the information they have gathered "will be submitted to the mother committee for assessment and discussion," before coming up with a decision.

Bro Edgar Aneza, a political science professor at the Western Mindanao State University described the Lorlie inspection "as a subordinate but not deserving of the word inquiry or inspection."

Aneza said Biazon and the committee members "focused on meeting and talking with the alleged violators and Filipino military officials."

"But they never made an effort to conduct investigation regarding those serious rights were violated, the victims themselves," Aneza said.

"This is clearly a case of feigned ignorance as here as a deliberate cover-up at worst," said Mike Chris, one of the spokespersons of the Stop the War Coalition Philippines, a group of 60 anti-war organizations in the country.

Lawyer Carmen Bitoss, spokesperson of the Oriente Peace Watch, a group of peace advocates, expressed deep concern over the congressman's pronouncement. "This is contrary to the verifiable facts on the ground," she said.

Biazon said there was nothing illegal with the stay of the American forces in the counter because of the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951.

"The military bases agreement of 1947 was abrogated in 1991. It was ceased the departure of American bases in Clark and in Subic, but other conditions to be in effect is the MDT of 1951, providing us the reasons for the joint activities between the US and RP troops," he said.

The senator also emphasized that as far as the Visiting Forces Agreement is concerned, there was nothing wrong with the continuous military training in the country.

"The IPA was ratified in 1999. It is nothing but a mechanism to handle cases of misbehavior, violation of our laws by US forces, and the US forces are here not because of 1951 but of Mutual Defense Treaty," Biazon said.

Cebu Rep. Antonio Cuenco, along with Representatives Eric Singson of Cambanga City, Regus Abbas Al of Davao Norte and Victor Celeste of Bongabong, also claimed the reported rights violation committed by the American forces in Mindanao.

"So far we have not found any violations committed here. For example, there was a (reported) violation in Basilan, a rape case, and when the act of war, we didn't find anything. All those help the Filipino troops find information regarding the activities of [Ahmad] Islamiyah and Abu Sayyaf and the al Qaida...enemies of the Philippine Republic—and we are happy to obtain information from anybody," Cuenco said.

He also dismissed as hearsay documents submitted to Lorlie alleging American soldiers committing abuses against civilians. "There was no evidence to support the documents so we consider all those as hearsay," Jaclee B. Alquiza, *Inquirer Mindanao*

'Tapis' police patrol Cordi tourist areas

CAMP DANGWA, BENGUET—BRITISH backpacker William Mackenzie got lost among the maze of rice terraces in Banaue, Ifugao, recently and asked for police assistance.

He turned out a tourist wearing a red "tapis" (Cordillera wraparound skirt) and high heels.

"I want to see the police," Mackenzie said. "I am the police," said the woman.

Chief Supt. Eugene Martin, Cordillera police director, said the "tapis" police in Banaue have become a tourist attraction since the Philippine Nation of Police thought of letting women police officers wear the traditional Cordillera skirt.

The tourist police, known as the Tourist Oriented Police, Community Oriented Police (Topcop), are composed of 24 male and female police officers and operate in Sagada and Bontoc towns in Mt. Province and Banaue in Ifugao.

Since they made their debut during the Imbayah Festival in Ifugao in April, they reportedly the "tapis" police, have been a hit with locals and tourists alike.

The tourist police program started in 2005 but it was fully implemented only this year.

A memorandum of agreement signed by the police with the Department of Tourism and local governments in the region said the tourist police would act as the regular police force in tourist areas.

They would also be assigned security, investigation and other police jobs to monitor foreigners, diplomats, dignitaries and habitual tourists committing Filipinos working or living abroad).

Martin said they chose the Sagada-Bontoc-Banaue area because foreign tourists, particularly the backpackers, usually ply that route.

The DOT trained the police officers on tourist spotting while the local governments of Sagada, Bontoc and Banaue gave them a course on local history and a briefing on the tourist spots in their areas. *Frank Cimatu, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

HOMETOWN *Snapshots*

THE "TAPIS" could fool criminals, as Ifugao's female police officers have been using them as part of their uniform.

INQUIRER Visayas

Festival of 'faces of hope, smiles' opens

By Carla P Gomez
Bacolod City

THE 2008 MASSKARA FESTIVAL, designed around the theme, "Bacolod, City of the World," opened with a bang on Wednesday, amid a shower of confetti and balloons filling the sky with a kaleidoscope of colors.

President Macapagal-Arroyo became the first ever Chief Executive to declare the festival's opening and did a bit of dancing in the front of the Masskara medic.

"The masks at the MassKara festival are faces of hope and smiles. And they will hopefully reflect the real faces of the people of Bacolod," the President said.

Bacolod Mayor Evelio Leonardia said the city's people had made the event world-famous. The city is known as the city of smiles and its residents have remained proud of their culture, strong-willed but warm-hearted.

Now in 26th year, the Masskara will end on Oct. 19. Its performers have been invited to perform around the world as tourism ambassadors of Bacolod, Leonardia said.

The word Masskara has a double meaning. It is a fusion of the English word "mass" or many and "kara" in the Spanish word for face.

"We are honored to have the President open what we look forward to as the biggest Masskara celebration yet," festival director Eli Tajanlangit said on Wednesday.

"Since 2004, when Mayor Evelio Leonardia initiated as mayor and appointed our group as organizers of this festival, Masskara has consistently grown and expanded. We hope to push the bar some more this year," Tajanlangit said.

Family-friendly

He said the city plaza as festival venue had been re-engineered to make it more family-friendly. New structures have been built and more lights have been installed.

New rules such as banning sidesders and the use of disposables will be enforced, Tajanlangit said.

This year's festival has more conveniences, such as having four major segments for the Search for Masskara Queen, the Electric Masskara street dancing and the Masskara boat cruisers.

The Masskara Queen festival contains competition will be held during the street dancing competition, with the contestants riding on floats in the plaza. Coronation night will be held on Oct. 18 at the open-air venue during the street dancing.

The new queen and her court, dressed in costume, will also join the countdown to the 70th Charter Day party at City Hall. A giant street party with fire hands will be held. At midnight, the people will sing the Inkolong song as fireworks will light up the skies.

Ten groups of at least 30 dancers will compete in street dancing.

Mask exhibits

Each, the Masskara fest Contest, will provide an opportunity to middle home-grown bands, using homemade instruments from junk materials and performing non-distinct beat.

An exhibit for masks called the Magica Maskara will run at the Orange Gallery in Mandalagan District. Now on its fourth year, the annual arts show, spearheaded by the city's internationally known artists, has been known for its forward-looking vision, playing around the idea of magical masks.

THE MASSKARA Festival in Bacolod City opened on Oct. 1 with festivities to continue until Oct. 19.

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Rescuers stop search for last miner

From page A1

day said he issued the order suspending the search for Joseph Amayosan after conferring with the rescuers.

Dela Cruz said the rescuers had "strongly suggested the suspension" of operations because the only area that remained to be searched had a "very (high) potential for gas poisoning, coupled with the strong suction (current) which makes further search extremely dangerous."

"(The) MGB, mandated by law to enforce public safety and the well being of all persons within the mine site, deems it best to suspend all search and rescue operations until such time that the situation (is) normalized," he said.

But the head of the Philippine Navy contingent involved in the search and rescue efforts told reporters in Camp Aguinaldo that the search had been "terminated."

"(During) our last dive, the current was very strong. It was dangerous," Navy Lt. Victor Ramos said by phone.

Midnight end

Ramos said the search for Amayosan ended at 12 midnight yesterday.

He said the rescuers, including divers from the elite Special Warfare Group, had attempted but failed to penetrate the area where Amayosan was last seen.

Asked if the miner was being presumed dead, Ramos said: "It's hard to speculate but the commander's advice was to terminate (the operations)."

He said the 29-man Navy team was at the Baguio City General Hospital and Trauma Center for a debrief after the stand-the-shift search and rescue operations that, according to the Navy, lasted for more than 120 hours.

Thirteen small-scale miners entered the mine in the Gold Field area in Barangay Dalicnan on Sept. 22. They were trapped by floodwaters unleashed by Typhoon "Nina" (Nesat) that battered the island Sept. 27.

Of the 16 miners, nine were found alive from Sept. 29 to Oct. 2. Six bodies were retrieved from Sept. 29 to Oct. 2.

A logbook entry shows that Joseph Amayosan and his brother, Mario Amayosan, were working in the 264 level of the (level 768 runnel), which is about 300 feet below the entrance, when Nina crossed the Cordillera on Sept. 27.

Mario Amayosan was found alive on Oct. 1, together with two others.

'Until we find a body'

Dela Cruz said rescue efforts would still ideally end "when we are able to produce (Joseph Amayosan's) body."

He said the Navy divers were in the cut-

CONCERN for rescuers' safety prompts authorities to suspend the search for the remaining miner trapped inside the tunnels of the abandoned gold mine in Itogon, Benguet. Photo: RAMON MUZON JR. AND ROMEO GACAD—AFP

sel until 6:30 p.m. on Thursday but failed to find Amayosan in the area where he was supposed to be.

The miner "might have been swept by (the current) or sidetracked through another portal," Dela Cruz told reporters.

He said the MGB had no information on the condition of Amayosan, who, police said, had pending robbery and theft cases in Baguio and Benguet courts.

"We'll (resume searching for him when (the limited environment) normalizes," Dela Cruz said.

Meanwhile, the Amayosans' next of kin remain hopeful.

In good health

"Until we see a body, we will not lose hope," said Arlene Amayosan, a victim.

She also said the family was distressed by reports that Joseph had been rescued but was now in hiding.

"Why do they leave on his pending cases? If he is found alive, we won't hide him (from the police). (If he needs to be jailed, so be it. What's important is he is found alive)," she said.

Arlene Amayosan said her other brother, Mario, had undergone a medical examination and was found to be in good health. He was to be discharged from the Baguio General Hospital later yesterday.

Gary Gano, Body Bebop Jr. and Gilbert Mallorin were also expected to leave the hospital yesterday.

Jose Fanio Jr., Antonio "Ngolit" Bagsa-

ngan and Jerry Manzobola, the first three miners rescued on Sept. 29, were discharged on Thursday.

Robert Alabuet and Jeyson Hinmayad have to stay longer in the hospital for further observation.

'Gov't to blame'

Two Catholic bishops blamed the government for the tragedy in the abandoned mine owned by Benguet Corp., saying it would not have happened if authorities had put a stop to illegal mining.

Baguio Bishop Emilio Cenzon said in a statement that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources should have been "strict with policy decisions" and should be held responsible for the tragedy.

Bontoc Bishop Rufino Sescon, who opposes mining in Nueva Vizcaya, said in a separate statement that the DENR and local authorities "should be very strict and, if possible, not relax about this matter and not allow themselves to be bribed (into) issuing permits lest they be called cronies(,) ... in isolation and in front."

Villena said "irresponsible mining" in the uplands was "doubly hazardous" because these areas were vulnerable to flash floods and landslides.

Illegal mining also poses dangers to those living in lower ground, Villena added in a report published in the website of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines. With reports from Nikko Dizon and Edson C. Tandoc Jr. in Manila

MIMI, one of only two captive tamaraws, snacks on grass at the tamaraw gene pool farm in Mindoro, the only place where the endangered species can be found

IN THE KNOW

WORLD ANIMAL DAY IS celebrated every year on Oct. 4, which coincides with the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals.

World Animal Day was conceived in 1931 during a convention of ecologists in Florence, Italy with the purpose of calling attention to the plight of endangered species.

It has since evolved into a celebration of all creatures great and small—or acknowledgment of the vital role they play in people's lives.

In the Philippines, previous celebrations of World Animal Day involved dog shows, free rabies shots and veterinary consultations. Some churches also bless animals on Sunday closest to Oct. 4.

During World Animal Day, activists also take the opportunity to call attention to the mistreatment of animals and to protest the captivity of animals in zoos. DJC

Portaborn, Inquirer file source

There may be 1,000 tamaraws in the wild

From page A1

The cattle population could be attributed to the government's conservation program started in 1970 and the populace's growing awareness of the need to conserve the animal.

The animal count, however, has been limited to the tamaraws' habitat in Mt. Iglit-Baco, where many of them are found, according to Montilla.

They can also be found in Mounts Calavite, Halcon (Iglit-Baco, Aruyan's Subbayan-Mupad and Bansud-Victoria-Bongabong-Mansalay, he said.

Symbol of conservation

"Today, the tamaraws are the living symbols of the ingenuity of the need to conserve what is left of our rich biodiversity," Environment Undersecretary Manuel Gaerlan said in his speech at the forum on tamaraw conservation.

But he added: "Based on our ecosystem's ensuing, more than 1,000 are in the wild. This may allow us to recoup its former population."

To do this, their trapped habitat should be rehabilitated. Otherwise, it would be impossible to bring back the original 10,000 population, he said.

Gaerlan said the public should bear in mind that tamaraws contribute to the equilibrium of the ecosystem. People have a moral responsibility to protect them for future generations, he added.

"In the mainstream conservation paradigm, it is said that we could benefit mostly in appreciation rather than the exploitation of our natural resources through ecotourism," he said.

Tourist attraction

The tamaraw could be made a prime tourist attraction—an activity that could generate money—which could be used to finance its conservation, he added.

At present, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is taking care of two tamaraws (a member and offspring) in a gene pool farm in Hirad, Occidental Mindoro under the government's conservation program.

Occidental Mindoro Gov. Josephine Ramirez-Sato pushed for the establishment of a research center to further study how the tamaraw population could be increased in their habitat.

"We believe the tamaraws should be studied in their natural habitat," she said.

Palace, Focap at odds over coverage

From page A1

corral" about censorship were "misplaced."

The President was to have held a roundtable discussion with the Focap on Thursday but the affair was postponed by Palace officials who told the group that Ms Arroyo would not be available as midnight.

At that time, Bunoan was just returning from New York, where he was a member of the President's party when she attended the 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly late last month.

Bunoan flew home later than the rest because he had to undergo treatment for food poisoning in a New York hospital.

No political questions

In a letter to Bunoan dated Sept. 30, Focap president Jason Gutierrez expressed the group's regret over the postponement of the media interaction with Ms Arroyo.

He told Bunoan that the group was looking forward to the "rescheduling of the meeting with the President."

"However, we in the Focap board and many of our members were dismayed when we learned that the President will not entertain 'political questions,'" Gutierrez said, adding:

"We earnestly request that the President reconsider this decision and allow a free-flowing interaction with Focap members without any restrictions on the subject matters to be covered."

Gutierrez also said the people would be interested to know Ms Arroyo's initiatives and programs "in response to outstanding political issues," and that to turn this focus would be the "conveyor" of her "message to the nation, be (it) political or not."

He said Focap members "strongly object to being party to any form of media (suppression, prior restraint or censorship."

"Pending (if certain subjects for discussion with the President does not bode well for press freedom," he said.

Yearly luncheon

The Focap invites Ms Arroyo to a luncheon it organizes in October every year. Gutierrez told the Inquirer on the phone.

He said the President had skipped the lunch four times in the past two years, but chief presidential assistant Jesse Robredo called him to say that the President had agreed to meet with the Focap, but in Malacañang.

Gutierrez said that at an initial meeting between members of the Focap board and Press Undersecretary Marie Cirunestan, the latter asked that their questions be given to the President beforehand.

He said he had made it clear to Cirunestan that the Focap board members could not accede to the request.

"First of all, we don't know what questions our members will ask because they have their own concern to follow (up on). And second, we wanted a free-flow interview with the President," Gutierrez said.

Per Gutierrez's account, in Sept. 30 Cirunestan told him that the Oct. 2 meeting was a go but that the President wanted to talk about the economy and would not answer political questions.

"I told him: I will convey this to our members but we had made it clear to the first meeting what our stand was," Gutierrez said.

He said that on the same day, the Palace informed the Focap that the meeting with Ms Arroyo had to be postponed because Bunoan was just then flying home and the preparations had been handicapped.

Gutierrez said the Focap was standing by its letter and that it hoped to still sit down with Ms Arroyo.

Weight of the presidency

In his Oct. 2 letter to the Focap, copies of which were distributed to reporters, Bunoan assured its members that their concerns were "straightened."

He said it was "unfortunate" that they would view in a negative light his office's effort "to forge the media interaction with the President on economic issues."

"There was no intention at all, as you purport, to 'manage the press' or 'censor' the members of media when a request was made in Focap to send in advance questions for the President to answer," Bunoan said.

"As we all know, every update saved or rescued carries the weight of the presidency. It is therefore fair that topical issues or issues are sent in advance so that adequate substantive preparations are made," he said.

Bunoan also explained that the preparations for the Oct. 2 roundtable discussion with Ms Arroyo hinged on economic issues given the "present situation" that "investment forum on the economy and/or economic issues."

Meeting with PCPC

"Please know that presidential events are planned based on thematic considerations or focused issues that are current that may help inform the public on such issues," he said.

Bunoan mentioned that Ms Arroyo met with the Manila Overseas Press Club yesterday in Malacañang "to exchange views on a no-attribution basis."

He said "the dialogue is not only limited to getting sound bites for the media, but a substantive exchange of views and information that is beneficial to the President as well."

Bunoan also said he still had to talk again with Gutierrez on the Focap's request. But he noted that the latter had said the group was "standing by our letter."

NEWS

Salvage diver hospitalized

Cyanide exposure blamed, but...

By Tarra Quismundo

AN AMERICAN DIVER WHO PULLED out of salvage operations at the wreck of MV Princess of the Stars in Romblon yesterday for numbness and shortness of breath is also being reportedly exposed to cyanide aboard a salvage vessel.

John Hancock, a 38-year-old diver of silver Fern Titan, was airlifted to Manila by a Coast Guard rescue chopper yesterday morning after experiencing these pains and numbness on his face and his left arm.

Dr. Ted Esguerra, a Coast Guard doctor, quoted Hancock as saying he was exposed to cyanide while handling a chemical called isocyanate from the Titan's own stock on board a Titan vessel.

The assistant recovered away from the water and is not related to the ongoing retrieval of cash embezzled inside the sunken ship, the Coast Guard said.

Halfway through

A total of 67 more barrels of endosulfan were retrieved as of 3 p.m. yesterday, bringing to 113 the total number of barrels retrieved so far. There are an estimated 400 barrels of the toxic cargo in the sunken vessel.

Salvors Lisca, in a press statement, denied any chemical poisoning occurred, saying the diver was suffering from "personal health issues."

The statement quoted Tiffany Cavitt, dive medical technician of the Titan and the first medic to attend to Hancock as saying:

"He has personal health issues, which has nothing to do with chemicals or dive job. He was cleared for the job before joining the team and he is a professional diver and properly trained in barrel [handling] operation/handling," Cavitt said.

Cavitt said that while doing some punch work for a hatch cut, Hancock complained of "shortness of breathing, and tingling sensations in his left arm, and overall feeling of sickness."

John was immediately brought to shore and was first attended to by doctors Bonie Antonio and Melvin Walling of the Department of Health's advance medical response team.

No cyanide

Titan and Harbor Star officials flatly denied that Hancock was exposed to cyanide.

"We categorically deny cyanide poisoning because we don't handle cyanide on board. We have no need for it. For the record, there has never been any incident of any chemical spillage in our salvage operations," said Ed Barraga, oil spill response coordinator.

Julius stayed at a local hospital overnight before being flown to Manila early yesterday morning.

Hancock was stable when he landed at the Medical City in Pasig before noon yesterday following a 90-minute flight from Sibuyan Island, Esguerra said. He was on oxygen support throughout the trip, the doctor said.

"The patient said isocyanate was accidentally spilled onto his left forearm in their work area aboard a Titan ship. They are using this chemical for operations. Aside that, he experienced left-sided weakness and difficulty in breathing," said Esguerra.

As of press time, there was no information on how much was spilled and where Titan used the isocyanate. The chemical component is known to be used in the manufacturing industry for paint, foams and fibers and causes asthma upon contact.

Dermal exposure

"His exposure was dermal, he absorbed it through the skin. But his exposure is minimal because, by his own account, he was able to wash it off and decontaminate himself on the spot. We know that from the fact that very strict safety regulations and they are well enforced in such situations," said Esguerra.

He said Hancock's attending physicians at the Medical City are also looking at the possibility that the diver is suffering from acute coronary syndrome, a condition where blood vessels in the heart are constricted.

Dr. Jeanette confirmed Hancock's symptoms but said there was "no definitive diagnosis yet" on his case. Physicists and gave no comment on the patient's chemical exposure.

"His left arm was numb and [experienced] shortness of breath. There is no definitive diagnosis yet because there's no supporting laboratory test yet. We will check if the family has a history of cardiac problems," said Jeanette when reached by phone yesterday.

"It has nothing to do with the endosulfan," she said.

It has yet to be ascertained exactly when the accident occurred, but Antonio said Hancock reported his complaints on Thursday, when he had been out of the water for four days.

Esguerra's team received the request for medical evacuation on the evening of the same day.

SALVAGE Barrels of endosulfan are hoisted from the sea and sealed (below) by crewmen to harvest (hazardous materials) cans. Retrieval operation was started Wednesday when one of the divers was taken ill.

Aplus METRO
Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

2 Aquila Legis fratmen nabbed for mauling case

Alleged victim member of rival fraternity

By DJ Yap and Arlyn dela Cruz, Correspondent

TWO MEMBERS OF A FRATERNITY BASED AT THE ATENEO DE Manila Law School were arrested Thursday night for allegedly beating up a law student belonging to a rival organization at a mall parking lot in Makati City Thursday night.

Jon Arnon Daryl Chua, son of Quezon City Sports Club president Antonio Chua, and Cyrus Valenzuela, a lawyer of the Optical Medical Board, spent the night behind bars at the Makati Police Headquarters after they allegedly mauled Raphael Augusto Jose, 22. They were later released after posting bail.

Their fraternity brothers, however, said the arrests were illegal and their detention arbitrary and indicated their intentions to file counter-charges against the police.

Chua, 25, who had just taken the bar examinations, and Valenzuela, 31, are members of the Aquila Legis fraternity. Jose belongs to the Fraternal Order of Utopia.

Based on Jose's complaint, the incident occurred at the P-1 Parking Level of the Power Plant Mall at about 9:45 p.m.

Jose told investigators that he, his brother Frederick and friend Glen Antone were about to board their car when they saw Valenzuela and Chua approach, the latter holding a beer bottle.

After an exchange of heated words, Chua allegedly began hitting Jose's face and head with the beer bottle, a report by the case investigator PO3 Jason David said.

"Therese, umpteen Jon Arnon Chua and Cyrus Valenzuela helped one another in mauling [Jose] and causing him to fall on the pavement," the report said.

Jose told the police they immediately asked for help from security guards, but the two got away. When Jose's group was on their way to the security office to have the incident recorded, they saw the suspects inside a restaurant and sought the assistance of police officers who arrested the two on the spot, David added. The policemen said the two suspects chose to stay silent during questioning.

But Chua's father, Antonio, a businessman, said his son told him a different story.

"This is just going to be he said, I said,' but this is what my son told me: There was a scuffle between the four of them: two Aquila, two Utopia," he said, though he could not confirm if the second Utopia member was Jose's brother.

Daryl, however, said the arrests were properly made and that detention was the legal and typical course in such cases.

At the Makati Police Office and at the Makati Fiscal's Office, lawyers identified with the two frats were seen in chief here. Jose is a member of Utopia whose members include, Supreme Court Junior Renato Corona, Rep. Mikey Arroyo and Mandaluyong City Mayor Benhur Abalos.

Chua and Valenzuela, on the other hand, count as former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, House Speaker Jose Nograles, and Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya as frat brothers.

The initial disposition of the case fell on the shoulders of Assistant City Prosecutor Alfons C. Torres Peña, a San Sebastian College graduate who said she survived law school without joining a sorority. "Napaka-simple ng kaso, but a battery of lawyers arrived: boto both sides," she said.

"There is a process and I made a recommendation based on the merits of the complaint. No pressure from any side," Peña added. Said Makati Police Chief Supt. Gilbert Cruz: "We did not take sides. We treated them fairly."

16 fishermen detained in Tawi-Tawi freed

By Nancy Carvajal and Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

SIXTEEN FISHERMEN ALLEGEDLY TAKEN hostage by armed men at dawn on Thursday in Tawi-Tawi province were freed.

Mario Gutierrez, executive assistant at Iena Fishing and Trading, the men's employer, said the fishermen and their three fishing vessels were released at 3:30 p.m. on the same day.

Gutierrez said the seven were whisked to her by the boats' captains identified as Douglas Serrano, Boni Tinding, and Roldy Bruna, and no money was involved in the release.

From Zamboanga City Nine Adm. Emilio Marayag Jr., commander of the Naval Forces in Western Mindanao, said the fishermen were actually held for questioning by Tagasak authorities because they encountered on a protected area. "There was no hostage-taking," Marayag said.

"They were not harmed, and all their belongings and equipment were intact," the said. No further details were available.

Gutierrez acknowledged the assistance of the office of Philippine Navy flag officer Rear Adm. Ferdinand V. Golez.

She also confirmed that Tagasak Island Mayor Dimatabkan Adpas helped secure the early release of the vessels and crew. She said the boats and crew were first brought to Sharangani Island near the border of Malaysia then returned to Tagasak Island in Tawi-tawi.

Gutierrez said the death of Gilbert Sumroad of the Special Calips Service Auxiliary, armed escort of the fishing boats, was reported to Marayag.

"We were informed that (Tagasak) Mayor Omar Adpas approached the rebel and there were warning shots fired. The Rebs were, on the other hand, thought they were pirates so they fired back," Marayag said.

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Rizal officials charged over Rodriguez landfill

By TJ Burgonio

TRIAL GEN CASIMIRO YNARES III and Rodriguez town Mayor Divine Carreon, involved in a long-standing row over control of a dump, are both facing charges over the continued operation of the landfill.

Environment groups filed "citizens' suits" against Ynares and Carreon in the Office of the Ombudsman for violating the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act. Similar charges were filed against six mayors in Bulacan province.

The complainants, led by Joey Papa of the environmental watchdog Bangon Kalikasan, alleged that local officials continued to operate dumps in their areas long after these should have been closed down under the law.

Also charged for operating dumps in violation of the law were Malolos City Mayor Danilo Domingo; San Jose del Monte City Mayor Eduardo Roquero; Pandi Mayor Antonieta Vivas; San Miguel Mayor Reynaldo Tiongson; San Rafael Mayor Ricardo Silverio and San Ildefonso Mayor Edgardo Galvez, all of Bulacan.

The other respondents were Lauro Antenza, chair of Barangay Manibog, Malolos City; another Manibog official and a councilman of the Malolos City government.

The complainants said they asked the officials in February to close the dumps in 30 days or face lawsuits, but they were ignored.

The solid waste management law (Republic Act 9003) mandates that all open dumps and controlled dumps be closed by February 2004 and February 2006, respectively.

"Gen Ynares opened a new dump under the guise of buying a 'sanitary landfill' for the mixed waste or garbage of Rizal and Metro Manila. This is already illegal under RA 9003," Papa said in a statement.

The complainants said these dumps outlined their pollution in the form of leachate from the landfill that seeped into groundwater sources, foul smell and noxious gases.

Lim padlocks unauthorized money-changing shops

By Alison W. Lopez

MANILA MAYOR ALFREDO Lim has resumed his spree, punishing corruption against city-owned properties in his city.

Lim led the shutdown of 22 money-changing establishments operating without permits in Binondo and Ermita yesterday as part of a crackdown on shops reportedly short-changing tourists.

The mayor padlocked before noon six alleged erring money changers on Mabini, Padre Burgos and M.H. del Pilar Streets. He also instructed the closure of 26 others through an order dated Sept. 30.

With Lim were secretary to the mayor Nelberth Garapiha, private bureau chief Nelson Ajero, City Hall Police Office chief Senior Supt. Alex Gutierrez, and Department of Public Services chief Engr. Col. Carlos Feliciano.

The mayor stressed that money-changing shops were not allowed to operate without a license from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Lim's actions was prompted by complaints from tourists and overseas Filipino workers that they were victims of fly-by-night money changers.

He said victims often realized too late that they had been shortchanged, and encouraged them to file charges against the owners of these shops.

MetroBriefs

Japanese man shot dead in Makati; 3 pals hurt

A JAPANESE national was gunned down while his three companions were wounded after an unidentified assailant shot them in front of a bar in Makati City late Thursday night. Investigators said the male suspect had fatally targeted Takahiro Asano, who bore the brunt of the assault and was killed instantly after getting shot in the face and the head. His companions Agnes Masukanagi, Ruel Ramores and James Anthony Bosch were also wounded in the attack. The incident occurred at 11:15 p.m. at the smoking area outside Looked Up bar and restaurant at the corner of Fleming and Jaca Streets in Barangay Palanan, said Supt. Manuel Santos Jr., chief of the Makati police investigation division. The four were seated at a table when the suspect suddenly drew a handgun and began shooting at the group. Asano died before reaching St. Claire Hospital, where the four were rushed after the shooting; the three companions were later declared out of danger. The suspect fled after the shooting. Santos said the motive for the killing remains unclear. EJ Fge

Bank messenger loses P3M to thieves

A BANK messenger lost P300,000 in cash to unidentified men who robbed him shortly after he collected the money from a banking school along E. Rodriguez Avenue in Quezon City late Thursday afternoon, Roger Cordova, a messenger of Metrobank, said the two men came out of the Dela Salle-CSB School of Banking around 5:10 p.m. and were about to board his motorbike when one man approached him and at gunpoint, took his cash-filled bag and fled in the getaway car. The man quickly boarded a waiting motorcycle driven by two other suspects and roped toward Aurora Avenue. Cordova said he tried to ask for help from the two watchmen of the school, but the pair allegedly ran inside the school building along with some students. Supt. Marcelino Pedron, chief of SCPO's Theft and Robbery Section, said he had ordered all police units in the city to intensify their checkpoints to prevent similar incidents from happening. Marlon Ramos

Le Soufflé marks 17th year

MOST VERY special treat awaits loyal clients who have been patronizing Le Soufflé through the years when it celebrates its 17th anniversary tomorrow. Both the Gorordo Central City outlet in Tagaytay City and the Rockwell branch at the ground floor of Arnaiz Towers, Rockwell in Makati City will be offering a 50 percent discount on all food items listed on the menu and beverages (pouring brands only). Le Soufflé Restaurant and Wine bar also has a branch on the 34th floor of Citibank Tower, also in Makati City.

Nothing against Velarde?

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

CAGAYAN DE ORO 2ND REPUB Rodriguez is asking the House committee on transportation, of which he is a member, to summon Dodie Puno, former executive director of the Road Board.

The Road Board disbursed money to local government units in the region of roads in their areas.

The money comes from the road users' tax collected from motorists who use the expressways.

The Board receives and disburses billions of pesos every year.

Rodriguez wants to know why Puno, younger brother of former Secretary Ronnie Puno, allegedly chose congressmen and local officials to whom he released money for road repairs.

According to the Mindanao congressman, there have been reports that contractors of road repair projects paid 30 percent for the cost of a repair project up front to some Road Board officials.

Puno should attend the hearing to clear the air after he was linked to irregular disbursements of the Board's funds amounting to billions of pesos.

If Puno doesn't heed the summons, Rodriguez said he would file a plunder case against the former Road Board official to the Office of the Ombudsman.

Puno resigned from the board last February for reasons known only to him.

But before he left, he allegedly disbursed P1 billion, according to Rodriguez, citing documents.

Let's hope that the Rodriguez-initiated probe will not end in a whitewash, courtesy of some high officials.

* * *

Sen. Ping Lacson wants Senate President Manny Villar investigated for the alleged "double entry" of P300 million for the C-5 Road extension project.

But why is Lacson quiet about the alleged gross overpayment to religious preacher Mike Velarde for his hot-through which the government built a road?

Members of Velarde's El Shaddai flock are very loyal to their leader.

It is very likely that whoever gets the backing of the popular religious figure will be voted into office by his followers.

Villar doesn't have that kind of following.

* * *

Capt. Emanuel Cachegan, a check pilot employed by the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (formerly the Transportation Office) allegedly owns a flying school.

Because of his position, he allegedly contacts all potential students pilots to enroll in his school, according to my sources.

If that's not conflict of interest, I don't know what is.

* * *

Cachegan's Diwa Aviation school has been the subject of complaints from foreign student pilots who alleged that despite having paid for their tuition in full, they could not fly because of the lack of planes.

If true, why was the school allowed to operate if it lacked training planes?

Man suspected of raping textmate nabbed

By Marlon Ramos

POLICE YESTERDAY WRAPPED young woman to be wary of glib textmates following the arrest of a mother helper who allegedly raped his 16-year-old text mate before midnight Thursday in Barangay Commonwealth, Quezon City.

The suspect, identified as Erick Gabillo, 24, allegedly used hyperbole to get the girl to agree to his demands.

But Gabillo, who is detained at the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) jail in Camp Karingal, claimed the victim was his girlfriend and that she consented to have sex with him.

The suspect, will be charged with rape and violation of Republic Act 7610, or the Anti-violence against Women and Children Act.

According to a report of the Children and Women Section of the QCPD, the suspect befriended the young girl through text messages two weeks ago.

On Thursday, the suspect allegedly asked the victim by text message to join him in celebrating his birthday.

But the teenager invited the suspect in her home. According to the report, the suspect persuaded the victim, who was alone at that time, to close the windows and shut off her house.

When asked by investigators why she gave in to the suspect's commands, the girl said she was apparently hypnotized.

"The suspect allegedly told her to put her head straight into his eyes. After a few seconds, she said she felt weak and dizzy," a policewoman on the case said.

The investigator, who asked not to be named, said the girl could not failed to fight off the suspect.

Fortunately, the victim's mother arrived around 11 p.m. The suspect tried to escape but was caught by the victim's neighbors.

A medico-legal report revealed that the girl was sexually molested.

PROTAGONISTA KONTRABIDA EKSTRA KONTRABIDA PROTAGONISTA BOMBA BIDA KONTRABIDA BIDA PROTAGONISTA KONTRABIDA PROTAGONISTA BOMBA PROTAGONISTA KONTRABIDA EKSTRA BIDA KONTRABIDA BIDA PROTAGONISTA PROTAGONISTA EKSTRA KONTRABIDA KONTRABIDA PROTAGONISTA BOMBA PROTAGONISTA KONTRABIDA EKSTRA KONTRABIDA PROTAGONISTA BOMBA BIDA KONTRABIDA BIDA PROTAGONISTA KONTRABIDA PROTAGONISTA BOMBA PROTAGONISTA KONTRABIDA EKSTRA BIDA KONTRABIDA BIDA PROTAGONISTA BIDA EKSTRA BOMBA

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Pelicula Pelikula Cinema
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Moscow: US economic leadership era ending

MOSCOW—PERHAPS INEVITABLE for a country often lectured by the United States about its over-reliance on energy exports, Russia is using the turmoil of the American financial crisis to do some lecturing of its own.

President Dmitry A. Medvedev has blamed what he called financial "egotism" for the crisis and said it should be taken as a sign that America's global economic leadership was drawing to a close. Along with some European leaders, Medvedev has called for greater multilateralism in financial regulations, reflecting a Russian position on international relations generally.

"The times when one economy and one country dominated are gone for good," he said on Thursday at St. Petersburg State University during the eighth annual Petersburger Dialog, a forum devoted to developing relations with Germany. After the American banking collapses, he said, the world does not want America as a "mugging calories."

Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, in Russia for the forum, said Germany, too, would "always support a multilateral approach" to market regulations.

Along with the Germans and others, Russian leaders contend that poorly regulated American markets created the current crisis. While it is hardly a new sentiment, in Russia there is a gloating quality as the American crisis deepens.

There has been a drumbeat of pronouncements in recent days on that theme. Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin made a speech about what he called American financial "irresponsibility" on Wednesday. Hearing similar themes came for Russia's stock plunge of more than 30 percent. Of the financial crisis, he said, "This is not the irresponsibility of some people but the irresponsibility of the system, which as it is known, chooses to be the leader."

In contrast to the Europeans who have also criticized his American regulation, however, Russians are facing a financial system that has been in such chaos that regulators suspended trading on the stock market three times last month. The global credit crisis could hit about one percent from Russian growth next year, said the finance minister, Alexei L. Kudrin.

As in other emerging markets, investors are pulling money out of Russia and depositing it in US Treasury securities because they are considered the safest place to park money. By the time Medvedev spoke on Thursday, investors had pulled about $52 billion in net private capital out of Russia since the second week of August, when the war in Georgia and political tension with the West heightened concerns about political risk here. AFP

A SCENE EVERYONE HOPES WON'T BE REPEATED In this 1931 photo, a long line of jobless and homeless men wait to get free dinner at New York's municipal lodging house during the Great Depression.

Falling oil price a bright note amid turmoil

NEW YORK—FOR THE LAST YEAR, rising oil prices have taken a toll on the economy, driving up gasoline and food costs, punishing airlines and automakers, and sipping a large hole in people's pockets.

But lately, nearly last amid the chaos in the markets, oil prices have been dropping sharply from July's triple-digit peak. If that trend continues, as many analysts expect, it will put billions of dollars back into consumers' wallets and provide badly needed support for a battered economy.

Ben S. Bernanke, chair of the Federal Reserve, pointed to the drop in economic growth as "a positive now" in recent testimony to Congress, even as he warned of the many other strains facing the economy.

Oil has been volatile in recent weeks, bobbing from $91 to $120 a barrel amid wild swings in the easier. But with oil demand falling in most Western countries and growth weakening in some of Asia's booming economies, the trend is clearer. Crude oil futures closed at $101.07 a barrel, down $4.56, on Thursday and have lost 13 percent in the last week alone.

While consumers welcome the decline, which will reduce the nation's $1.3 billion daily oil import bill, oil producers are reacting sanely.

Mexico said it might have to cut its budget next year as petroleum revenues dropped. Countries like Russia and Venezuela, which have been relying a wave of energy-fueled nationalism, could be forced to scale back their ambitions, and energy projects that require enormous financing could be delayed.

These difficulties could prompt the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries to step in forcefully to shore the slide in prices, analysts said. AFP

US military recruiting boosted by rise in bonuses

ASSYRIAN mural sculptures are displayed in the Iraq national museum in Baghdad on Sept. 24. Artifacts shown as Assyrian king, whose former capital is now in modern Iraq, belonging what looks like a mailed soldier as soldiers pile decapitated heads at his feet. AFP/FILE

WASHINGTON—AFTER SEVEN years at war, the US military paid recruits hundreds of millions of dollars over the past year as they answered the call in droves.

According to data compiled by The Associated Press, the Army and Marine Corps doled out nearly $640 million in the fiscal year that ended on Tuesday to entice recruits to sign up.

The two services continue to bear the brunt of the US-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but recruits were buoyed by investments in new ways to lure them, such as cash bonuses and college benefits.

The enlistment incentives coupled with the promise of thousands more for education, increased the costs of Army and Marine bonuses by 23 percent over last year's totals, The Associated Press has learned.

The money—particularly in these shaky economic times—has proved to be a strong recruiting tool, even as the US death toll in Iraq surpasses 4,100 and violence in Afghanistan escalates.

As a result, the Army, Marines, Navy and Air Force all met their recruiting goals for the year. The Air Force did not provide bonus data.

"This money helps create enticements for the all-volunteer force," said Army spokesperson Staff Sgt. Joe Piccolo. "We recruit not only the soldier but his or her family, and this money is important to them."

According to data obtained by the AP, the Army and Marine Corps allocated a bit more than $500 million in bonuses and college fund payments in fiscal year 2007, compared with this year's total of more than $639 million.

Recruits usually receive a portion of the bonus when they report for training, and get remaining payments as they report for duty or when they hit specific service dates.

The Army incentives grew from $332 million in 2007 to $547 million this year, while the Marines' budget jumped from $66 million to nearly $93 million.

The active duty Army brought in 80,102 recruits for the fiscal year, beating its goal of 80,000. AP

1.1 million Americans infected with HIV

WASHINGTON—A NEW ESTIMATE of how many Americans have the AIDS virus puts the number at almost 1.1 million. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said on Thursday.

The CDC numbers, based on 2006 data, show the population living with HIV is growing as people become newly infected and as more patients survive thanks to HIV drugs.

The report also suggests that past estimates that more than one million Americans were living with HIV overstated the actual total number of people with HIV infections at the time.

The agency used different methods than it has in the past to calculate the number. Its most recent nationwide estimate of one million had been given for 2003, and using the new methods the CDC figured that 900,000 were living with HIV that year.

The CDC report underlined previous findings that the epidemic disproportionately affects blacks of both sexes as well as gay and bisexual men.

Globally, 33 million people have HIV and 25 million have died of it. Reuters

Eating too much makes the brain go haywire, says study

WASHINGTON—OVEREATING makes the brain go haywire, prompting a cascade of damage that may cause diabetes, heart disease and other ills, US researchers reported on Thursday.

Eating too much appears to activate a usually dormant immune system pathway in the brain, sending set immune cells to attack and destroy invaders that are not there, Dongsheng Cai of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and colleagues found.

The finding, reported in the journal Cell, could help explain why obesity causes so many different diseases, it might also offer a way to prevent obesity itself.

"This pathway is usually present but inactive in the brain," Cai said.

Obesity is a growing global problem, with 1.6 billion people estimated to be overweight or obese in 2007. Drugs marketed as his to fight obesity have only limited success and often cause unpleasant side effects.

Cai's team worked on mice, starting to explain studies that have shown that obesity causes chronic inflammation throughout the body. This inflammation is found in a range of diseases related to obesity including heart disease and diabetes.

They homed in on a compound known as IKKbeta/NF-kappaB.

Immune cells such as macrophages and lymphocytes use it but Cai's team found it in the hypothalamus, a part of the brain linked with metabolism in cases and the hormone leptin.

"The hypothalamus is the 'head quarters' for regulating energy," they wrote.

They found high levels of the compound there but it was normally inactive.

When they fed mice a high-fat diet, it became extremely active and when it was active, the body ignored signals from leptin, a hormone that normally helps regulate appetite and insulin, which helps process the food into energy.

Shutting IKKbeta/NFkappaB made the mice eat more, while suppressing it made them eat less.

Cai believes the same has discovered a master switch for the diseases caused by overeating. Reuters

Human remains found at Fossett plane crash site

SAN FRANCISCO—CRASH SITE investigators found human remains amid the wreckage of Steve Fossett's small plane on a remote California mountain, the chief of the National Transportation Safety Board said on Thursday.

Parts of the small plane lost more than a year ago were scattered over a large debris field at around 3,658 meters on a mountain near the Nevada border, and search crews found a "very small" amount of human remains, Mark Rosekind, acting NTSB chair, told Reuters by telephone.

"Did we find some? Yes, a very very small amount," Rosekind said.

Fossett, 63, vanished after taking off in a single-engine Bellanca Citabria Super Decathlon on Sept. 3, 2007, from the airstrip of hotel magnate Barron Hilton's ranch in Nevada, sparking a long but fruitless search.

The finding of human remains may close months of debate over whether the millionaire adventurer actually died, although Rosekind said local officials would be responsible for examining the remains.

"It will be taken by the sheriff and the coroner and they will do the work," Rosekind said.

A local sheriff's official said a bone had been found at the crash site but declined to say if it was human or animal.

Rosekind at an earlier news conference noted that a judge had declared Fossett dead.

"Our job is to determine what happened on the mountain," he said. "Given the length of time that the wreckage has been there it is not surprising to come into a debris field and not find a lot of human remains."

Clues to Fossett's disappearance came suddenly this week when a hiker met for two Yosemite National Park found identification cards and cash, prompting a full-on search that uncovered the crash site.

Investigators confirmed on Thursday the small plane was the one in which Fossett took off a year ago.

Parts of the aircraft were scattered over a search area measuring 46 miles by almost 122 m long. A helicopter ferried investigators close to the site and will be used to haul away pieces of the plane on Friday—before a snow storm sweeps in.

Despite weeks of extensive land and air searches after Fossett disappeared last year, no wreckage was found, and he was declared legally dead in February after investigators concluded his plane was deliberately in a fatal accident.

Even before Thursday, family and friends took the week's events as an end to the saga.

"The uncertainty surrounding my husband's death over this past year has created a very difficult situation for me," said his widow, Peggy Fossett. "I hope now to be able to bring to closure a very painful chapter in my life."

"Now that their plane has been found we can finally bring closure to Steve's wonderful life," Richard Branson, Virgin Group founder and Fossett's friend, said in London.

"The frivolous stories one also be put to rest and family, friends and the rest of the world can now pay tribute to a truly great and remarkable man," Branson said. Reuters

KATE IN SOLID GOLD A 56-kilogram solid gold sculpture of British model Kate Moss made by artist Marc Quinn is unveiled at the British Museum, in central London on Oct. 2. AFP

The WORLD

Edited by Lawrence B. Casco

Planet facing mass die-off of animals, plants, say experts

PARIS—EARTH'S ANIMAL AND PLANT SPECIES ARE VANISHING at unprecedented rates, evidence that the planet is facing a tsunami of mass extinction, experts gathering for a global conservation conference next week have warned.

Whether through habitat loss, pollution, hunting, or indirectly by global warming, humans are squarely to blame for what may be the first major die-off in 65 million years, they say.

From Sunday, more than 8,000 ministers, UN officials, NGOs, scientists and business chiefs will brainstorm for 10 days in the Spanish city of Barcelona on how to brake this loss and steer the world onto a path of sustainable development.

The World Conservation Congress, held every four years, will also release an update on Monday of the famous "Red List," deemed the global standard for conservation monitoring.

It will include the most comprehensive study ever made on the survival status of Earth's more than 5,000 threatened species.

The 2007 edition already showed more than a third of 41,000 species surveyed are facing extinction; a quarter of all mammals, one out of eight birds, one out of three amphibians, and 70 percent of plants.

Our distant evolutionary cousins, primates, are especially vulnerable.

Hunted for food and traditional medicines, their habitat shrinking, more than 70 percent of known species in Asia, for example, are under threat.

Science has identified more than 1.9 million species to date. If microbial organisms are included, this is probably only a tenth of the life forms on Earth.

"Biodiversity is disappearing at an accelerated rhythm and we have to act quickly to slow and prevent the extinction crisis," said Achim Steiner-Andreev, director general of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which is organizing the Oct. 5-14 congress.

With 11,000 volunteer scientists and more than 1,000 paid staff, the IUCN runs thousands of field projects around the globe to monitor and help manage natural environments.

"The species is superfluous—each one is the product of millions of years of evolution and plays a role in the ecosystem," explained Wendy Foden, head of the IUCN's climate change and species program.

There are many reasons to protect the diversity of life on Earth, under pressure from rates of habitat, pollution, climate change and over exploitation, scientists say.

One is the sheer scope of the change underway.

"The evidence is overwhelming—and we have really good since now—that what we are seeing is probably a mass extinction," the staff, to 499 million years, said Michael Hoffman, a renowned expert at IUCN who worked extensively on the Red List.

The current pace of die-off is 100 to 1,000 times higher than the so-called "background rate" of extinction—the average rate, over millions of years, at which species bite the dust.

AFP

WHAT'S INSIDE
Bayron upends pros at Valley /A22

SPORTS

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Manny blasts solon over 'mismatch' warning /A23

Coke-TNT duel touches off 34th PBA season today

By Marlon R. Castillo

A TALK 'N' TEXT DERVISH BEHIND up in the guard spot, and a Coca-Cola side that lives its life around dominant Ted Tenderos clash today to formally take the lid off of the 35th-34th Season with the start of the Philippine Cup eliminations at the Araneta Coliseum.

Jared Dillinger, picked second overall in the Rookie Draft, and James Castro, the three-time amateur MVP, will play in local basketball's grandest stage when the Tropang Texters, as the Phone Pals will now be known, tackle the Tigers at 3:30 p.m.

There's really nothing new with the Coca-Cola lineup other than the expected reconciliation between coach Bitoy Favis and John Arigo, the former Alaska gunslinger who spent most of last season on the bench.

Elaborate opening ceremonies precede the only game scheduled.

Popular children showbiz personalities will be the featured guests on the opening-day show centered on the theme "PBA Caring for Making Pinoy" transform all the programs at 6 p.m.

Child actor Mikaila Morales performs with the world-renowned Las Piñas Boys Choir and Cynthia Luna, winner of the World Championship of the Performing Arts competition recently.

Tenderness in the game goes to the Giants Ascobeans in Pinoy whose Gabe Norwood, the highly-touted batsman George Matos star in the US NCAA, debuts with the Pain or Shine Elasto Painters who are hoping to make the playoffs for the first time.

Hale or Shine, formerly Welcoat, will also parade Ardenio Miranda, another Fil-American guard whom the Painters acquired in a trade with Alaska on Draft Day, in their clash against Air21.

The team, listed as one of the teams to beat here, get their campaign going also tomorrow in the second game of a regular twinbill, against the ever-solid San Miguel Beer at 8:30 p.m.

Dillinger, who played collegiate ball for the University of Hawaii, has been touted by not a few to be as good, if not better than Norwood, and will definitely see major minutes right on his first official outing on Philippine soil.

And should he play to point, it would be interesting to see whom Favis will match up against him, considering his 6-foot-5 frame, compared to Coca-Cola guard Alex Cabagnot.

Jimmy Alapag will still be the Talk 'N' Text quarterback with Ali Peek and Dondon de Ocampo manning the slot for the frontcourt after they gave up Jay Washington to San Miguel during the off-season.

WORLD TEN BALL

Bañares, 2 other Pinoys gain last 16

By Marlon R. Castillo

JERICHO BAÑARES TURNED UP VETERINARY, AND REMINDED THE BOYS THE event just can't separate Sean in the late stages of the World Ten Ball championship.

Bañares continued his Beast addiction, winning the last eight racks last night to get past Filipino-Indonesian Dodong Alwi, 9-6, and make the last 16 of the $400,000 event with Marlon Manalo and Dennisthanee Puljol at the Philippine International Convention Center.

The native of Antipolo, who gave up a chance to pursue a college degree to take up the sport as a profession, was deadly accurate once he got his chance at the table, keeping Alwi on his seat most of the time to eke up a place among the elite.

Bañares, who won the national junior title in March and has continued to make strides in the open bracket, never got rattled despite trailing 1-4.

He steadily nibbled away at that deficit with the savvy of a veteran, making the difficult shots when he had to and playing a great defensive game to keep the veteran Alwi at bay.

Marlon Manalo was also in his element, never giving countryman Pieter Arpilleda a chance by ripping the qualifier in a safe table for a 9-2 decision.

The last-ever Puljol was the first Filipino to make the last 16, beating Ramon Fuentes of Japan, 9-4. (For side story on A24).

Each of the three Filipinos are now assured of $4,500 (roughly P212,000) for getting this far.

The Bandeyanes' Jeffrey De Luna finally saw the end of the road, bowing to Taiwan's Po Chu-sen, 1-9, in a scary outing which saw the blonde-dyed 24-year-old lose the final nine racks.

De Luna became the second Filipino top gun, after Antonio Gabica in the eliminations, to hit the showers, and is came as a surprise after he had flashed repeat form the night before by humbling Stefano Sandro Tan, 9-8.

"Nothing went for me today," the 24-year-old de Luna, nicknamed the "Bull" for his power breaks, told the Inquirer in Filipino.

The last-16 matches were being played late last night, with Manalo clogging it out with the Netherlands' Niels Feijen, the reigning world straight ball champion who ripped the Spaniard David Alcaide.

Bañares also has a fourth in Nick Van den Berg as a foe. Van den Berg ousted Marcus Chamat of Sweden, 9-3.

Puljol, meanwhile, was ranged against Ying Mien-chung of Taiwan in another television match, one where he admitted feeling nervous when he eliminated Austrian women world No. 1 Jasmine Ouschan Thursday night.

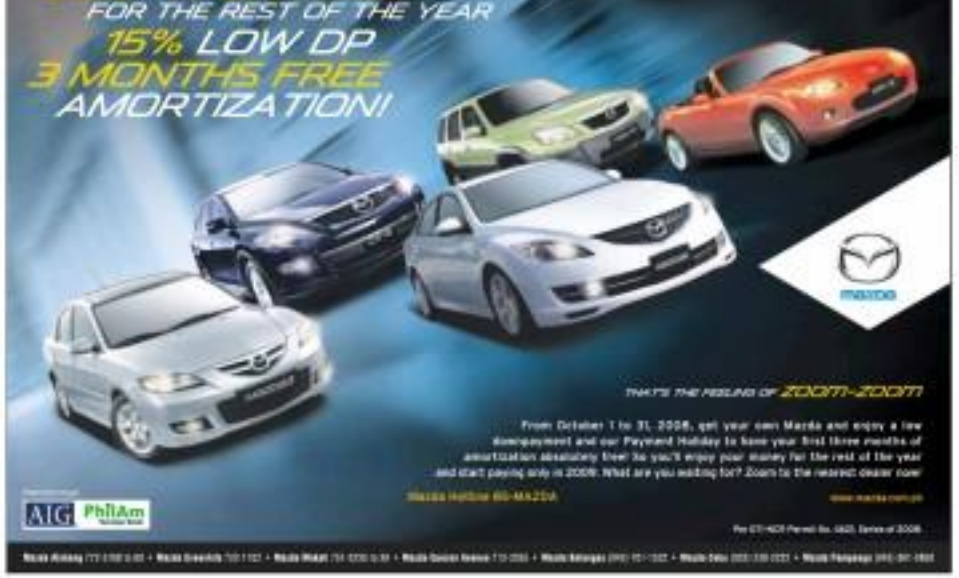
Shane Van Boening of the United States and Wu Chia-ching of Taiwan set up an intervening last-16 match after reaching separate foes in shrieks.

Van Boening, the tournament player to beat, lost just five racks in defeating fellow American Shawn Wilkie, while Wu, who won the world 9-ball title as a 16-year-old a couple of years ago, whipped Italian Bruno Sbaraiore, 9-6.

Reigning world 9-ball champion Daryl Peach of England was also eliminated, taking a 9-5 loss to countryman and close friend Mark Gray.

German top gun Ralf Souquet, despite a brain stomach that almost had him pulling out of the event blisters, day night, also advanced after a 9-4 triumph over Vilmos Foldes of Hungary.

He next faces Chinese Liu Haifan, a 9-6 winner over Canada's Tyler Edey.



Go out! You don't know what you're missing

BARE EYE

Rincel Trinidad

JOBS TO THE BUSTERS WHO wanted lofty sums in a bid to wrench the reigning World Ten Ball championship at the PICC.

The tournament is already a qualified success even before it could enter the crucial quarterfinals.

There will be nine elusive matches on chess at the PICC within the week.

Take this from one who nearly skipped the series because Bata Reyes and his gang of cued Pinoy pool pikolero decided to boycott the World Ten-Ball series.

Ten Ball, with its exacting format that practically eliminates row-luck (number), is the game to espouse if they plan to sell billiard's for inclusion in future Olympics.

* * *

What a show it was as Filipino Jeffrey de Luna showed up like an overgrown smurf and pocked his way back from the cliff in a game worthy of preserving, together with other Bata Reyes classics.

Stunning in his uniform character bandolo, De Luna unnerved full stardom before a sparse crowd. Flashing steel nerves and sharpness in advancing to the round of 32.

De Luna had looked game after he was shaken and buried by former Ist, a burly Indiaeed Serbian, maybe the finest defensive player in the world today. 5 to 4, in the main match late Tuesday.

The epic chow-back had the spectators, on the edge of their seats, erupting like members of a college ball cheering squad.

It's a big, big send!

* * *

Woe to the loss who allowed them sellers to be swayed by doomsayers who did not see anything good with the World Ten Ball championship and its intrepid producers.

Of course, Dennisthenes Pelpol was anything but dull in pulling off a shining win over Jasmin Ouschan, the dial, blonde treasure and top woman entry who had been running hands back-and-forth and rearward game.

But the brilliant Pelpol, who finished after reaching the hill, 8-7, in the race to nine, had to prey hard, his eyes closed, to squeeze out a miracle rake from the Austrian blonde's scoreball.

Obedient's fate cut on the orange 3-ball bobbled on the right corner pocket, thereby sending Pelpol, now all lit up, onto an easy clearout and the crucial win.

* * *

Now, hold it. By the time De Luna runs through with his classic comeback, it was already 3:15 in the morning for this television viewer, who had to stay up for the delayed broadcast.

"If any Filipino or more make it to the semifinals, ABS-CBN has promised to carry the games live," announced Tony Sarmiento, resident wrecker of the billiard's and Member Congress of the Philippines, tournament organizer and host.

The series is being broadcast over Studio 23, but there's a great chance of it being moved to a more popular channel by ABS-CBN Sarmiento added.

* * *

Anyway, going by the sound of the game crowd, doomsayers have visibly succeeded in painting a morbid picture of both the World Ten Ball series and its limited organizers who also sustained the successful 2006 and 2007 World Pool Championships.

If you haven't even taken a peek at PICC, or tuned in your TV to Studio 23, you too must've been victimized by the lies peddled in the media about the story behind the World Ten Ball series, like super trader Sebastian Uno and the internationally decorated Ito Makoberta, a respected and accomplished writer.

They're holding a great international event at the PICC.

You don't know what you're missing, folks.

Bayron upends pros at Valley

By Macong R. Castillo

ANTIPOLO—RODNO BAYRON IS READY TO turn pro, and there's no evidence more glaring than this case.

The 26-year-old Dumaguete yesterday nipped Bernard Gebastero with a monster par on the first playoff hole to become the first amateur to capture a professional event in the country in nearly 20 years by winning the ICTSI Valley Challenge at Valley's South course here.

Bayron, who ended regulation with a run-of-the-par 72 for a 54-hole 215 total, actually parred the challenging 18th hole in a span of less than an hour, while Gebastero bogeyed after finding the front side bunker and failing to restore par from 24 feet.

Valley's 18th is an unusual finishing hole, being a par 5. But it needs to squeeze the best out of anyone since it is uphill, being at 251 yards with the green guarded by bunkers left, right and center.

Bayron, who was discovered and honored by the National Caddies' Open program before transferring to ICTSI at the start of the year, put a 4-iron safely into the green before watching Gebastero find the trap.

Both of them finished tied with 24 feet of the cup, it was all over as Bayron just left his first putt some four feet short for the one-par.

Though Gebastero were home with the P264,000 top prize out of the P1 million put up by ICTSI owner Enrique Razon, Bayron's victory justifies his invitation of playing for money next year.

"I'll have my chance to win the money someday," Bayron, younger brother of former RP Azkals stopper Jay, told scribes in Pilipino.

Third-round leader Elmer Salvador, meanwhile, sputtered on the last day again, dropping five shots in the back nine to throw away a lone semifinal at the turn for a 74, leaving him in a tie for third with Ivy Pagunsan at 216.

Pagunsan, the sweet-swinging circle of fairies from Iloilo Province, churned out a 71 even as Jay Bayron fashioned out a 70 for sole fifth at 217.

Amateurs Jerel Anabe and Alvin Balandan finished in a seventh-place tie at 220 with Michael Bibat after a 73 and a 77, respectively. Bibat, the rookie pro, submitted a 74.

READY TO TURN PRO Rufino Bayron holds his trophy aloft.

PBL rejects Ekwe stint, B. King plea

By Cedrill P. Tejan

THE PBL BOARD YESTERDAY REJECTED Benjie King's appeal to have Nigerian hire Ekwe in its teams in the coming season starting on Oct. 23.

The board decided not to bend the existing rules which bars only eligible players with GSIS/SSS playing years would be allowed to play for the PBL teams which adopt the school, PBL chairman Mikee Romero of Hapee Toothpaste said yesterday.

Although he played for San Mig Coffee in the previous conference as part of the Coffee Kings' tie-up with Sen Reda, the 6-foot-10 Ekwe has used up all his playing years for the Lions.

"Ekwe, being a non-Filipino, cannot play for any other team as the PBL is a Filipino league. His only hope is for him to be naturalized to be eligible for the draft," Romero said.

"Players who relinquished their eligibility either go back to their mother team or go through the draft."

"We just have to move on without him," said Burger King coach Allen Gregorio.

The Whoppers retain Kristhildis veteran Ekwe as Sen Sibuatan reinforcement Jason Ballesteros, Pat Simero, Ulu Mac Bacaoard and the services of San Beda's NCAA champion squad are all in the fold.

Among the San Beda players eyed to beef up the Whoppers are point guard Borgie Hermida, swingmen Ogie Menor, JR Tiwon and Ilan Gamolinda and frontline player Jake Pascual and Dave Marcelo.

The Whoppers, third placers in the previous conference, also own the rights to University of the East's Jimmy Aurelano and University of the Philippines standout Woody Co and Senior David.

Refs' aborted pullout: NCAA panel may invite Eala

By Jasmine N. Payo

THE NCAA SHOOTOUT SAMAHANG Basketbol ng Pilipinas executive director Noli Eala when it meets in inquiry into the aborted pullout of SBL referees from the men's basketball Finals.

And Eala said he is willing to face any inquiry to clear himself and the SBP.

PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad, whose referees served as game officials in Season 83 of the NCAA, recently submitted a "sworn statement" to the management committee alleging that Eala called him before the championship to order to discuss the officiating.

"The issue is on the propriety of the call, we'll invite Hakki and ask his side also," said NCAA management committee member Henry Aquilo of College of St. Benilde. "This is about an official of a national sports association calling about the officiating before a game and it already jeopardized our tournament."

Hakki said the bosses that as far as he was concerned, "this is over-issue."

"But since they dragged me only me but also the SBP, it is right that they hear my side and give me a chance to face my accusers."

The controverted incident initially prompted Trinidad to pull out the referees in a day held over the Game 3 double-header.

Trinidad reasoned that his referees had been made scapegoats by certain personalities, but the NCAA Masters exercised him in reconsider hours before the game by affirming "its support and faith in the integrity of the PBL referees."

dti

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE & INDUSTRY
PHILIPPINES

CONSUMER ADVISORY

To : **The Federation of Philippine Industry (FPI), manufacturers, distributors, importers, repackers and retailers of consumer products whether locally manufactured or imported**

It has been observed by monitoring teams of the Department of Trade and Industry that certain manufactured and processed goods with labels written/printed in foreign characters/languages are without the required labels translated in English or Filipino.

Everybody is reminded that on 21 January 2008, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) issued a Department Administrative Order No. 1, Series of 2008 entitled: *"Addenda to the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 7394, Otherwise Known as the Consumer Act of the Philippines or the Department Administrative Order No. 2, Series of 1992 on the Matter of Chapter IV on Labeling and Fair Packaging,"* on the mandatory translation of product labels in English or Filipino with foreign characters/languages and such other requirements set forth therein. The Order was published on 28 January 2008 in two newspapers of general circulation, to wit, Business Mirror and Philippine Daily Inquirer, and took effect on 12 February 2008.

To answer the request of the industry sector for them to comply, the Order prescribed a transitory period of six (6) months to stakeholders concerned for compliance thereof which lapsed on 13 August 2008.

In this connection, all stakeholders concerned are advised to comply strictly with the provisions of the above-cited Order. The DTI Order prescribes enforcement and administrative penalty.

03 October 2008, Makati City.

PETER B. FAVILA
Secretary

NOTICE

Manny blasts solon who 'wants his name known'

Hoya jabs at Roach: He doesn't know all

By Marc Anthony Reyes

MANNY PACQUIAO HAS ITSMERO off criticisms and disaster scenarios from back home with one sharp counterpunch.

In a report in the newspaper USA Today on Thursday, Pacquiao accused a Filipino politician of trying to gain popularity by criticizing a supposed "mismatch" in his fight with Oscar De La Hoya at the MGM Grand.

"It's just one guy, one politician who has a plan to run for office and wants his name known," Pacquiao told the newspaper.

Cagayan de Oro Rep. Rufus Rodriguez called on the government last week to stop Pacquiao from fighting De La Hoya because he risked getting hurt by taller, heftier and more experienced 154-lb world champion.

The 29-year-old Filipino superman, regarded internationally as the best fighter across all weight classes, said that De La Hoya is "not that big" for him.

"He's not that big," said Pacquiao, the reigning World Boxing Council lightweight champion. "I believe I can handle his power, and he can fight me."

Pacquiao is moving up two weight classes from 135 pounds to face De La Hoya at 147 lb.

The Golden Boy, who towers over the 5-foot-6-inch, Sarangani City lefty by four inches at 5-10, last fought in three divisions in 2008. As a 160-lb challenger, De La Hoya whipped Felix Sturm in 2006 to win the WBO welterweight crown.

Rodriguez noted De La Hoya's close advantages in height, build and firepower to rub the Games and Amusements Board (GAB) to suspend Pacquiao's professional boxing license.

"I'm afraid that Dene can hurt Manny very badly," Rodriguez told reporters. "Manny is a national treasure. If something bad happens to Manny in that fight, it's the government and the GAB that would be blamed."

Pacquiao's American adviser, Michael Koncz, admitted that there were also apprehensions in their camp when suggestions for the fight first came up.

"I thought about Oscar being four inches taller and 15 pounds heavier than Manny and we did our best to talk Manny out of the fight," Koncz told USA Today.

The 35-year-old De La Hoya said that a statement by Pacquiao's trainer Freddie Roach that he "can no longer pull the trigger" was a "challenge" he could not ignore.

"When I read reports from Freddie Roach and Manny Pacquiao, it's as to-the-point: I feel challenged," said De La Hoya.

"Every top athlete looks for that challenge to motivate them. Be ready for a long, fun fight ... because nobody, Pacquiao, there is no boxing fight."

PUGNACITY Pacquiao (second from left) and Oscar De La Hoya stand for photographers in front of the Statue of Liberty Wednesday. AFP

THE FIGHT IS STILL two months away, but Oscar De La Hoya is already throwing verbal jabs at the man whom doctors once challenged him not fighting again.

And it's not Manny Pacquiao, but Freddie Roach.

Just before leaving the second stop of a fight promotion tour in Chicago, De La Hoya insisted that he has a training breakdown of one and half months over Pacquiao, and that he's just 12 lbs away from the 147 lb ranch weight.

The 35-time, six-division champ also took a dig at Pacquiao's trainer Roach, who openly said the inventive Trainer of the Year got it all wrong during his sensational split decision victory over Floyd Mayweather Jr. last year.

"He (Roach) knows my training regimen, but he doesn't know everything," De La Hoya was quoted by Bienvenido Icasas.

Roach linked De La Hoya for the May unification fight after his long, three-round Floyd Mayweather Jr., bagged off in deference to his outranged son.

"I chose Roach to be aggressive," said the Golden Boy. "My thought was to be aggressive with Mayweather. That was a big mistake. The strategy Freddie had was the incorrect one."

De La Hoya has vowed to embrace the style of Ignacio Beristain, the former Hall of Fame trainer of Juan Manuel Marquez who failed to beat Pacquiao in their two previous fights.

In an interview with ABS Sports, Roach said that De La Hoya's mis-word counter is the fight as much as Pacquiao is lightening quickness.

"When we get older, our skills diminish, and Oscar's not the same fighter he used to be. The very confident Manny Pacquiao will knock him out in this fight." Marc Anthony Reyes

ROACH: Hoya by KO

SPORTSWATCH

Codinera chess gets going

INTERNATIONAL MASTER WILLIAM ALLAN AND 12-year-old Malcolm Barok lead the entries in the 2008 Codillera Annual Chess Tournament which kicks off at 1 p.m. today at St. Francis Xavier Seminary Gymnasium in Mandaluyong City.

The two-day event is open to players with standard ratings of not over 1800. It will apply the five-round Swiss and time control of 90 minutes per player.

Allan is a solid pick at FIDE 2000 with the champion getting P5,000.

100 fights in LGBA today

MORE THAN 100 FIGHTERS SPICE UP THE second day of the Luzon Gamecock Breeders Association's (LGBA) 17-Day Derby series today at the San Juan Coliseum.

Early qualifiers in the second legal this derby sponsored by Magnolia Corophee 2000, Lakpue Drug and Presidential are Jil Herrera (Island Red), Bienvenido and William Ilas (Sweet Rooster), Patricio Flores and Justino Dino (EC-QUAFF Bantamites), Edmund Wade (Wild Wild), Michael Gallardo (Kanayan Knights), Dr. Ayong Lorenzo (El Excellence) and Boy Sandia (Red Rich Feed) who posted three wins each Tuesday night.

At San Lazaro GP
By Top Choice

Eala straightens out BCAP 'confusion'

By Cedrif P. Tupas

NATIONAL BASKETBALL COACH YENG GUIAO yesterday described the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas' appointment of Rajko Toroman as national basketball team project director as "confusing." SBP executive director Noli Eala straightened out some of the mixup, including the fact that Toroman may end up coaching the national team.

"It boil naman pinapabuti' siya, sabihin nga (Noli is confusing us)," Guiao, a board member and former president of the Basketball Coaches Association of the Philippines said at the Scoop Stores yesterday.

"Toroman is on board as a project director," Eala again clarified in a phone call to the Inquirer. "He will put together a program for the national team, we will study his program and we will decide what to do after then. For now we (are) starting the possibility of him coaching but all that will come after we see his program."

Toroman and the SBP officially agree to terms Tuesday.

"What we were asking was a wide-ranging consultation by the SBP-BSP before signing any contract," Guiao said. "But what happened in the contract has been signed before we were consulted."

Eala denied, however, that the BCAP made a request for such a consultation. The former PBA commissioner also revealed he has been in constant communication with BCAP head Chito Narvasa regarding the Toroman issue.

"We've been very transparent when it comes to Toroman," said Eala. "In fact, we've talked to Chito three to four times already and we've sent him a copy of Toroman's [curriculum vitae]."

FUTURE STAR Albert Lim Jr. displays the form that made him the most dominant player in the unisex 10-under division during the 2008 Nike Junior Tennis South Luzon regional finals. Lim and 30 other regional champions will compete in the national finals on Oct. 4-5 in San Pedro Alabang. They will dispute top honors in the unisex 10s under, boys' 14-under, boys' 12-under girls' 14-under and girls' 12-under divisions. Winners will compete at the Malaysia Junior Tennis Circuit from Nov. 24-Dec. 8 in different venues.

UNITY TICKET

Peping, Art in a coalition?

By Marc Anthony Reyes

CALL IT THE PHILIPPINE OLYMpic Committee "Dream Team."

A super coalition is being cooked up by top sports officials to create a single ticket for the Nov. 28 POC elections that would ensure unity in the national Olympic body winners said yesterday.

The same sources said representatives of POC chief Jose "Peping" Cojuangco is working out a plan with their counterparts in the camp of Art Macapagal to create a single ticket for the elections.

"Everybody is suggesting that it's better if we don't have elections at all," said the highly placed source. "Elections will only cause divisiveness."

The unity ticket, according to the source, will have Macapagal running as chair and Cojuangco as president. Lower positions will still have to be evenly distributed between the two parties.

That, however, might cause trouble to the rivals' key allies who are eyeing vital positions in the POC.

Taekwondo's Robert Aventajado, incumbent POC chair, is reportedly locked in a run as chair for Macapagal, while Baseball Rep. Moises Pastorfelia, incumbent first vice president, is said to be running as chair under Cojuangco's wing.

Steve Hontiveros of bowling is reportedly seeking yet another term as secretary general under Cojuangco. He will be up against triathlete's Ivan Carreiro.

"It is going to take a lot of statesmanship on the part of the officials concerned," said the source.

Cojuangco won his first four-year term in 2004 by acclamation.

AMA Titans grab Region 6 title

AMA COMPUTER LEARNING CENter moved one step closer of claiming a spot in the Finals-IGLOT 2008 Philippine Collegiate Championship League after edging Eastern Visayas State U in the Region 6 & 8 clash in the Ormoc City Superdome.

With the victory, the Titans clinched a place in the PCCL zonal tournament together with MCAA third placer Letran, Region 3 champion BIT International College, the runner-up of the Cavalli and a wildcard entry.

The top two in the zonal championships will join the elite group in the PCCL Flying V "Everest Of Road Challenge to Wheels.

The Titans, the reigning Ormoc champions, crushed the St. Paul Business School Angels, 86-57, to set up a title showdown with the Hawks, who subdued the Western Leyte College Maestrog, 65-60.

Already assured of berths in the zonal championships, University of Visayas and University of San Jose-Recoletos conference champions of the Cavalli crown this weekend in Cebu.

The third places of the Cavalli will also go through the zonal phase. Cedrif P. Tupas

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Dodgers clobber Cubs; Rays shine

CHICAGO—THE CHICAGO CUBS' championship drought looks to extend to another 100 years after they fell to a 10-3 loss to the Los Angeles Dodgers on Thursday, making it two losses from two home games in the best-of-five National League Division Series.

Philadelphia also took a 2-0 lead in their NLDS by beating Milwaukee, 5-2.

Manny Ramirez hit a nationwide homer for Los Angeles, while Russell Martin had a three-run double, and the Dodgers took advantage of four errors by the clumsy Cubs.

"It's not good baseball. In fact, the last two days, that's probably been the two worst games we've played all year," frustrated Chicago manager Lou Piniella said.

Chicago became the 23rd major league team to lose the first two games at home in a best-of-five playoff series, according to the Elias Sports Bureau, and only one lost come back to win—the 2001 New York Yankees against Oakland.

Chicago is strong for its first World Series title since 1908, but quickly found itself on the brink of elimination.

In Florida, in their first ever playoff game, the Tampa Bay Rays beat the Chicago White Sox, 6-4, on Thursday in the opener of their American League Division Series.

Evan Longoria homered in his first two at bats as Tampa Bay rallied for an historic victory in the first of a best-of-five series. AP

TAMPA Bay Rays' Evan Longoria hits a solo home run in the second inning.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Shin grabs one-stroke lead

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA—South Korea's Ji Hai Shin shot a five-under 67 on Thursday to claim a one-stroke lead after the opening day of the inaugural LPGA World Championship.

The 20-year-old Shin became a household name back home in South Korea after she won the Women's British Open in August, and positioned herself for another big victory.

Shin led by a stroke from Paula Creamer, whose 4-under 68 that featured a birdie on 17 following a bogey on the previous hole.

Six players were tied for third after 3-under 69s: Lorena Ochoa of Mexico, Annika Sorenstam of Sweden, American Angela Stanford, Yani Tseng of Taiwan and South Korean pair Na Yeon Choi and Seong-Eun Kim.

Ochoa and Sorenstam were only on the second fairway as the last twosome to start, when play was suspended for 26 minutes because of dense fog.

Tseng, who is leading the Rookie of the Year race and ranked 63rd, played with her right arm wrapped with tape because of nagging elbow tendinitis. At 19, Tseng is the youngest in the elite 20-player field this week. AP

Fabulous Finds

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DEMOLITIONER: Pulpul is trying to make a name—a better sounding one, at least—for himself in the pool circuit.

Just call him 'Plong Plong'

By Pluong R. Carrillo

LIKE MANY ATHLETES' SUCCESS STORIES, Domoithoreus Pulpul discovered brilliance in his craft after poverty, and the tragic demise of his father, forced him to work as a pedicab driver and a pool hall "spotter" when he was just 10 years old.

"I remember giving my mother P300 a day as part of my earnings in 2000, and that helped her raise eight other children," Pulpul told the Inquirer in Filipino while practicing for his match late last night.

"I had to quit school and start working because we didn't have food on the table. I had to do that because my father died a few months before," added Pulpul, whose second child, a daughter, was born a week before the start of the event.

"I am the youngest in a brood of nine and yet I had to work."

Pulpul lost his father, a welder, to lung cancer. Though the family withdrew support from the pot for Cagayan de Oro, Domoithoreus never considered draughts of vanishing there. It was as if, he said, his gut told him to work in a pool hall.

"It was out of this is where my fortunes lay," Pulpul, who is being supported by Bad Ideya Magazine, said.

The 23-year-old has entered three and won money that goes with it after barging into the last 16 of the first-ever World Ten Ball championship with a 5-4 demolition job of Ramon Parente of Japan last night at the Philippine International Convention Center.

That latest victory, which came after a thrilling 9-8 conquest of envoy Aurelius Antonio Jasmine Duachan Thursday night, has amused this court-very poor man of at least $1,500 (roughly P72,000), well over the amount he needs to pay off some debts.

The crowd that has followed his exploits has learned to embrace him as an upcoming hero of local pool, with the regulators in his name dearly but surely being forgotten.

Part of the money he will win, will go to helping his mother start a small business with his wife and pay off a P5,000 debt for the birth of his second child, whom they will christen Richelen.

There are a lot of other interesting things to know in the life of Domoithoreus Pulpul, the new pool hero of the Philippines who now desperately needs a moniker that would hopefully justify how good he is.

With Pulpul swearing anything but smut in English, and Demoithoreus evidently hard and long in pronounce, his nickname "Plong Plong," could just be one.

But it also wouldn't be bad if something better comes along.

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BUSINESS
Editor Raul D. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Carrie S. Nuñana

ten tech items

Bangko Sentral hints at end to rate hikes

Stocks down 1.79%

PHILIPPINE STOCKS FELL SHARPLY as investors sold ahead of an expected slowdown in the United States, the world's biggest economy, whether or not Congress approves a $700-billion financial package to "troubled" Wall Street firms, fund managers said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) plunged 1.79 percent or 46.69 points to 2,566.21. The broader All Shares index shed 27.83 points or 1.69 percent to 1,615.56. Value of trades amounted to P2.2 billion involving 846.56 million shares.

Foreign investors turned net sellers of P742.73 million, selling P1.116 billion against total buying of P1 billion yesterday.

Stocks opened 13.64 points higher at 2,586.05 but fell to a day-low of 2,564.78.

The movement mimicked Wall Street's 3-percent plunge Thursday, ahead of US Congress' vote on the $700-billion financial rescue plan.

"The US will have to go through a period of consolidation first before we see global markets turn for the better. It has to take the

STOCKS B3

Inflation may have peaked in August

By Doris C. Dumlao

AHEAD OF A CRUCIAL MONETARY POLICY MEETing on Monday, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas chief yesterday affirmed that the country's inflation rate may have peaked, hinting at some leeway to end its cycle of interest rate increases very soon.

"It looks like...if we haven't seen yet...we may be nearing the peak. It's also possible we may have peaked already in August particularly if you look at not only what's happening here but also what's happening in other countries, particularly in some Asian countries," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. told reporters yesterday.

"You've already seen a turnaround, inflation is going down and that could also happen to us," Tetangco said.

The BSP's policy-making Monetary Board is set to finalize monetary settings on Monday, without waiting for the release of the September inflation report by the National Statistics Office. The NSO's report is not due until Tuesday next week.

The central bank, however, has forecast a range of a high of 12.7 percent and a low of 11.6 percent against the 12.5 percent year-on-year rate in August.

"When we came out with the forecast for September we said it could be higher or lower depending on the effect of weather disturbances. At the same time, we saw reduction in oil and food prices," Tetangco said.

The policy meeting on Monday is seen by financial analysts as a turning point for the central bank, which is battling 17-year-high inflation against a backdrop of a slowing domestic economy and a worsening global financial crisis.

BANGKO B2

Big push for RP medical tourism set

By Nonoy M. Dumaliy

THE WORLD'S LEADING EXPERTS in health, wellness and tourism are gathering in Pasay City in what is touted as Asia's biggest industry event on Oct. 22-25 even as some of them believe local businesses could earn as much as $2 billion yearly.

Dubbed "Embracing health and wellness to the heart of Asia," the conference offers a panel of 16 experts that include health icon John Gray, author of the best-selling book "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus."

Tourism Undersecretary Cynthia L. Carreon said organizing the summit would cover medical tourism, regenerative and rejuvenative health and wellness, and retirement.

"This will set the tone for what is expected to happen globally in the next decade," Carreon said.

Citing an industry report published in the Medical Tourism Association magazine, which is published in the United States, she said that ongoing efforts in the Philippines to build up the sector suggest that 500,000 medical tourist arrivals a year was "very achievable in the very near future."

The report said that with the government capitalizing on the growing trend in medical tourism, the services and sector

SEE PAGE B3

Bourse suspends trading of ATN Holdings shares

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE has suspended trading of shares of ATN Holdings Inc. for a month starting Oct. 7 for undisclosed stock trading dealt by three of its directors from Jan. 7 to June 30 in violation of laws relative to possible insider trading.

In a letter to ATN Holdings dated Sept. 26, the PSE said transactions—both buying and selling of ATN stocks—by company directors Horacio Reyes, Antonio Delgado and Richard Palao serve as violations of Sections 13.1 and 13.2 of the PSE's revised disclosure rules.

"I know that to the disclosure department, I understand there is a three-minor letter. It involves the block-out rule. It's a disclosure rule that says if you are an insider like a director, principal officer, you cannot trade on your company's shares from the time you acquire inside information until two full trading days after the disclosure. It's not enough that you disclose. You still have to wait after two trading days to be able to trade the shares)," PSE president Francis Lim said.

In its letter to ATN, the PSE said that based on its records, the transactions of the three directors were not disclosed within five trading days after any acquisition or disposal of ATN shares, in violation of Section 13.1, which states that companies must disclose to the exchange the direct and indirect ownership of its directors and principal officers to shares of the company within two trading days after these circumstances: The company's shares are first admitted to the official registry of the PSE; a director is first elected or an officer is appointed; or any acquisitions or sale or change in the shareholders of director and officer.

The PSE also said the transactions of Reyes were found to be in violation of the exchange's "black-out rule" which prevents company directors and principal officers from dealing with the company's shares when a material nonpublic information is obtained and up to two full trading days after it is disclosed.

"The issuer (company) submitted its quarterly report for [the] period ended Dec. 31, 2007 on Feb. 14, 2008, and its board approved to change the par value on Feb. 20. It was during this period, Feb. 13 to 26, when Mr. Reyes transacted with issuer's securities," the bourse said.

The bourse cited in each officials of the company to comment on the PSE letter but was told that its vice president, Paul Sarta, to whom the PSE letter was addressed, was to answering.

A staff member at the company said ATN has sent its reply to the PSE.

The PSE also imposed a penalty of P250,000 on the company on top of the trading suspension for the violations of disclosure rules twice.

ATN was formerly Zeitgeist Mining and Industrial Corp., incorporated in February 1961. In 1998, ATN changed its name and its purposes purpose to a holding firm from a mining company.

Probes possible insider trading

PURCHASE PRICE: P6.16B

Philex sells 20% stake to First Pacific

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

PHILEX MINING CORP. TRUSTEE day said it has agreed to sell a 20.16 percent stake in the company to Hong Kong conglomerate First Pacific Co. Ltd. for P6.16 billion.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, Philex vice president for finance Ramon Migriño said Philex signed yesterday an agreement to sell 778.44 million common shares at P7.91 each to First Pacific, the controlling shareholder of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. led by telecom czar Manuel Pangilinan.

The price of P7.91 represents a 10-percent premium over the acquisition cost of Philex, which shares have been accumulated as part of the mining firm's buyback program and currently held as treasury shares.

The total consideration of P6.16 billion is going to be transacted in two tranches, the first 10.08 percent on Dec. 15 and the second on later than Nov. 30.

The agreement further provides for the appointment of new directors to the Philex board upon completion of the transactions, namely Pangilinan as one of the directors in his capacity as First Pacific managing director. The other nominee has yet to be named.

Stocks down 1.79%

From page B1

lever medicine, namely the bailout, before things get better," said Jonathan Decarlos president Harry Liu.

ATN Kim Eng Securities president Lorenzo Rosas said the US financial bailout plan was already "discounted" or factored into stock prices ahead of yesterday. "The market is focusing on the outlook (after) the bailout and it will draw out bottom prices. An economic slowdown is inevitable," Rosas said.

Jerome Gonzales, head of research at fund manager Philequity Fund, said investors were betting that the bailout would be approved by US Congress.

"We're back to the same problem, which is the economy. After this bailout, people are seeing the problem of slower growth in the US. It's possible that they will enter into recession this third quarter," Gonzales said. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

Bangko Sentral hints at end to rate hikes

Front page B1

easing global financial turmoil that is now putting pressure on other central banks to slash interest rates to provide liquidity to the markets.

Strategists said the BSP would release new inflation forecasts on Monday, possibly narrowing the 9-11 percent forecast range for this year. He reiterated that the average for the full year may be closer to the lower end of the forecast as the January to August average was at only 8.8 percent.

Meanwhile, the peso continued to trade with caution ahead of the BSP's policy meeting and a renewed attempt in the United States to pass a $700-billion bailout package needed to take out toxic assets clogging the US banking system.

The peso fell to as low as 47.30 at the Philippine Dealing System before closing at 47.04 to a dollar. It closed only marginally weaker than Thursday's finish of 47.

The local currency, like most other currencies in Asia, was clobbered by a meltdown in stocks ahead of the US Congress' voting on an amended bailout package. The Thai baht, Indonesian rupee and rupee in the Malaysian ringgit lost ground against the US dollar yesterday.

Big push for RP medical tourism set

Front page B1

grow 6 percent in 2007—improving exponentially from a growth of 2.4 percent in the previous year.

In 2005, the local health and wellness tourism represented an estimated P60.5 billion or 1.16 percent of gross domestic product.

The report said the growth in medical tourism has created opportunities for international vendors of medical equipment and instruments considering the enthusiasm of industry players to invest in upgrading and improving their facilities.

Also in 2005, the Philippines' total imports of medical equipment was estimated at $139 million or 32 percent higher than in the previous year.

As for the retirement sector, Philippine Retirement Authority Chair Edgardo B. Aglipay said greater preparedness was needed for the country to get a bigger share of the market, the global population of which is expected to reach 625 million by 2015.

"In 2010, a fifth of the world's population would be retirees," Aglipay said. "But currently only one out of every 50 foreign tourists who visit the country is persuaded to retire here."

He said the local retirement industry was betting more heavily on medical tourists, considering the growth that the industry has been seeing.

Coconut oil exports down 52% in Sept., group says

But industry expects good year ahead

By Amy R. Nunez

EXPORTS OF PHILIPPINE coconut oil slumped by 51.9 percent to only 34,850 metric tons in September this year, according to preliminary data from the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines.

In the same month last year, exports of coconut oil reached 72,344 MT, said UCAP executive director Peroxie Aguirre.

Aguirre said the sharp fall in the year—may be attributed to orders and shipments that may have been delayed for October and is probably lower supply of coconut oil during the month.

Despite the decline in shipments, the September volume brings total coconut oil shipments for the first nine months of the year to 643,212 MT, higher by 10.7 percent compared to year-ago volume of 579,241 MT.

From a release start in the first four months of the year, coconut oil shipments have begun its steady decline in July when shipments fell by 14.4 percent year-on-year, dropping further in August by 24 percent and last month, by 51.9 percent, UCAP data showed.

Data from the Philippine Coconut Authority showed that the biggest gain in coconut oil shipments was 315 percent in 121,766 MT, recorded in January this year, from a year-ago level of 28,777 MT.

The strong performance of the industry was attributed to its slight recovery from the damages wrought by strong typhoons in 2006.

Favorable weather had also helped boost coconut output during the year.

The Philippines, the world's biggest supplier of coconut oil, exports 80 percent of its local coconut oil production.

For this year, the PCA had said that it expects coconut oil exports to expand by 12.8 percent to 1 million MT, from last year's 886,057 MT, on the back of the expected recovery of local coconut production.

Coconut oil exports are also expected to account for more than half of the projected volume of total coconut-based products exports, seen to reach 1.930 million MT in 2008.

This is higher by 12.2 percent compared to last year's shipments of 1.707 million MT.

SCIENCE/HEALTH

E-mail sr_science_health@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Cesar D. Mangosong

Caesarean babies likely to develop allergies, expert says

By Charles E. Rukan

MOTHERS should now think twice before choosing a caesarean section especially when there is no medical or emergency reason to have it.

According to one expert, babies delivered through caesarean section are significantly more likely to develop allergic diseases and infections later in life than children born naturally.

"The reason is that the bacteria present in the mother's birth canal does not develop in the baby," said Dr. Bengt Bjorksten, emeritus professor of Allergy Prevention and Pediatrics at the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden.

Bjorksten, who recently visited the Philippines, is one of the world's leading experts in pediatric immunology who did studies on the role of neonatal microorganisms in the development of some of today's immune system.

Stimulates

He explained that as the baby is being born, the bacteria residing in the mother's birth canal colonizes the baby's "sterile" intestine, thereby enabling the baby's immune system sufficient time to identify the "invaders," and afterward, develop protective immunity against them.

Such process could not happen during caesarian section because the sterile condition that the procedure is carried out keeps the baby from encountering these bacteria.

Caesarian section is a procedure in which the baby, rather than being born vaginally, is surgically removed from the uterus.

The risks identified include the development in children of asthma, food allergy, gastrointestinal infections, alleviation of responses to food allergens, allergic rhinitis, wheezing, hay fever, gastroenteritis and infectious illnesses in the early years of the baby's life as well as the development in adults of asthma.

By DAN ESTON

"These risks linked to caesarean births—whether chosen by the women or her doctor—are higher, regardless of variables such as demographics, medical and perinatal history gestational age of the fetus, pregnancy complications, unless the baby is born and the skills of those helping deliver the baby," he said.

Bjorksten noted that those born or who had to undergo caesarean section should not lose hope as his findings may pave the way for a means to strengthen a newly born's immune system and lessen the chance from acquiring these risks.

Rising

Bjorksten's studies came as a response to the rates of caesarean section for nonemergency cases that have risen dramatically in developed as well as in developing countries.

From previously being considered a "last ditch resort" the procedure is now being performed with such frequency that many view it as routine.

Mothers who choose to undergo the procedure cited reasons like being quick in comparison to most labors, pain-free (the operation is carried out under anesthetic). Other reasons are the mother's fear that the baby may be "squashed" and damaged in the normal delivery process and the fact that with the advancement of technology and doctors' experience, the procedure has been made much safer to perform.

25 percent

On average, 25 percent of births worldwide are currently born by caesarean section according to the latest figures.

However, the World Health Organization stated that no region in the world should be justified in having such procedure greater than 15 percent.

"As more and more women schedule or demand caesarean section, we also noted the rising prevalence of allergies in the assessed populations," he reported.

Aside from Bjorksten's findings, a recent Lancet study noted that women are three times more likely to die during a caesarean section than during a normal delivery.

Hemorrhage, infection, paralytic ileus, pulmonary embolism, respiratory distress of the newborn and adverse effects on future pregnancies are only a few of the possible consequences of a procedure gone wrong.

Bjorksten's visit to the Philippines was through Health Nutrition Institute, a multidisciplinary educational organization dedicated to the science of healthy nutrition, providing information, guidance and support to bridge the latest scientific discoveries and their application to achieving optimal nutrition.

Is the doctor in?

By Rafael D. Cuerdo

DR. ANTHONY LEACHON, WHO is one of the "Ten Outstanding Filipino Physicians" for 2008 recently narrated by the Department of Health and Philhealth Insurance Corp., stressed the importance role of physicians, not only as experts in medical problems of patients, but more so in the social aspects as he leads his leading touch in all patients, rich or poor, who come to him.

Together with the other awardees—Doctors Bernard Cuchia, Pastor Dimagiba, Agdon Elio, Rhea Hosanna Gigantana, Minh Khu, Lennox Cabral-Lim, Mercedes Seguin, Blessie de la Rama-Salvador and Edward Wang—Dr. Leachon or Tony, as we locally call him, represents an encouraging breed of physicians, who have decided to remain faithful to their oath as physicians and to stick it out in the country come what may.

"For all 10 of us, it [the TOFP award] is an expression of the vow we made in our Hippocratic Oath as doctors; it is the expression of what it means to be a Filipino physician in our times—an expression of the values and vocation of our being Filipino physicians," Tony said in his acceptance speech.

Firm commitment

When the doctor bangs a sign "The doctor is in" on his door, it is actually a firm commitment to make himself available whenever his service is needed, and not only when it is convenient for him to be so. A small town doctor who hangs this sign on his small eatery in his town means that a doctor is always within their beck and call should something happen to them. "The doctor is available. He is accessible. And both the patient and the family are reassured that a healer is on hand," Tony said.

MEDICAL FILES

The doctor being in does not only mean that he is available to scribble a prescription but he is available to heal, comfort, counsel, educate and reassure his patients. When he does that, he actually empowers his patients and allows them to sleep soundly at night knowing that they always have someone to run to, no matter what the time of day is.

"The centrality of the role of a doctor in a community's sense of security, sense of stability, sense of completeness was deeply embedded in my psyche," Tony said.

Commit to continuous learning

Being "in" does not only mean being physically present all the time but also remaining competent through the years, keeping abreast with the dynamic changes and developments in the medical field. Tony explained: "Committing to my dream of becoming a physician broke, confident and hope-given means to commit to continuous learning and constant evolution. The doctor is called upon to be an expert, a scientist, a humanist, a community leader and a feminist."

Furthermore, "being in," according to Tony, also entails the doctor to be:

- A visionary concerned with the future.
- A business and passionate advocate making stands at policies that affect his profession and his country.
- A servant shaper of building a healthier, happier Philippines.
- An agent of reform making a difference in the community and country.

Are our doctors always in? The statistics are not very convincing to indicate a positive answer to this question. There are 3,499 towns and 35,000 barangays to the country, with a total population of 88 million. Forty-percent or something like 35 million Filipinos have never had the pleasure of being seen by a doctor.

Healthcare challenges

Meanwhile, the exodus of doctors going into nursing abroad continues at the rate of 3,000. Filipino doctors eventually found hospitals in underserved areas closing down, barely able to maintain a reasonable batch due to service.

These and many other healthcare challenges slide the movable plaster on the signage on the door to the left indicating that "The doctor is out." So doctor is available. No one to heal, to comfort, to reassure, to counsel. Or so it seems. Say so long as we have doctors like Tony and the other TOFP awardees, there's reason to hope that things will change. And every Filipino, no matter what his station in life is, or where he resides, will bump a sigh of relief when he goes to the doctor's clinic and sees the poster's sign that reads: "The doctor is in."

Wanted: earplugs underwater

THE OCEAN DWELLERS HAVEN'T said anything, but they've probably noticed their surroundings have grown a bit noisier from before, partially because a message for the nervous neighbor can be heard by their neighbors on the other side.

A new study by researchers from the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans suggests a cacophony carrying through the ocean roughly 10 decibels more than they did before. In a few more decades ocean noise levels could rise by an extra 10 percent.

Faster through water

Part of the reason for the noise is that sound waves travel faster through water than through air. This would explain why you might've heard someone's voice while underwater or in a swimming pool before your friend standing on the pool like the same distance away from the speakers gets the message.

But another factor contributing to the increased noise is all the carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere and oceans. According to ocean scientist Peter Brewer and his colleagues, some 530 billion tons of carbon dioxide have been dumped into the ocean, with more coming in at the rate of a million tons per hour.

While the gas causes the temperature on land to rise, it also makes the waters more acidic. In this week's issue of Geophysical Research Letters, Brewer and his colleagues suggest that these changes, though fairly small, have been enough to raise the natural soundproofing of the waters, allowing sound to carry through the depths farther than had been previously known.

Think of the sound waves passing through water as the body parts that are moved from one end of the ocean to the other by a crowd at a rock concert. If the crowd of molecules were less tightly packed together like they are in the air, the sound waves would take longer to get from one point to the other.

Because water is such a good conductor of sound, many underwater animals such as fish, dolphins and whales rely on sounds to communicate with each other, find food and generally get around.

Increased background noise

But these communications systems, it seems, will need to be modified somehow as the waters become increasingly noisy. As sounds carry farther, listeners and senders will need to adjust to the increased background noise, sort of like having a perpetual party line where talking on the phone.

The range of sounds affected by the increased acidity includes regular noises from ships and boats, which are the sounds marine mammals use to find food and woo another. So far the researchers aren't sure what the increased noise levels are doing to the animals, such as any behavioral changes among the species, for example. One adjustment that's been theorized though, is that the animals will have to learn to shout louder to get their messages across. Anyway all along that what they say will likely also go farther than they'd wanted.

"The conclusion that sound absorption in the ocean will be reduced and that ambient noise levels will rise should not be surprising, although the scale of the change has been underappreciated," wrote Brewer and his colleagues in their paper. "It remains to be seen how marine mammals will adapt to an ocean increasingly transformed to sound at low frequencies."

E-mail the author at mazsin@msn.com.

DISCOVER

Mazzie Santos Ballon

THE BODY'S KREBB CYCLE

The KREBB CYCLE is that cycle that treats and ensures the body's sustained energy and vitality. The KREBB CYCLE allows the continuous production of Adenosine Triphosphate (ATP), which serves as the body's battery. ATP stores energy that the body needs to do all the functions it has to do. The KREBB CYCLE is nurtured by vitamins and minerals. The good news is that GENACE PHARMA has recently launched multivitamin syrup, KREBB C, which contains all the necessary vitamins to ensure the peak performance of the KREBB CYCLE.

KREBB C comes in syrup form for children and capsule form for adults.

KREBB C syrup is best for children whose energy levels are low because they are not meeting the daily nutritional requirements in the food they eat. KREBB C syrup contains thiamin, thiamine H Complex, Vitamin D, Vitamin C and Vitamin E. It also contains the Citicoline Growth Factor (CGF). Lysine and Threonine. The Citicoline Growth factor (CGF) stimulates tissue repair and protects cells against toxic substances. Lysine assists calcium absorption for bone development and in building muscle protein. It also aids in producing antibodies, hormones, enzymes, collagen formation, as well as tissue repair. Taurine, together with Zinc is targeted for proper eye health and vision. Taurine is also helpful for anxiety, hyperactivity and poor brain function. KREBB C syrup has the perfect vitamin combination for kids.

KREBB C capsules for adults has the same contents as the syrup but with the additional contents of Iron, Magnesium and Manganese. These are the three main elements that are needed to convert food to energy in the human body. They are vital for working adults who are stressed due to day to day activities. Iron deficiency means that the blood can't get work carry enough energy for the body's requirements, thereby leading to tiredness and fatigue, decreased alertness and shortened attention span. Magnesium and Manganese, on the other hand, are needed to help our brain function normally, prevent depression and boost our immune system.

The timing of KREBB C SYRUP and KREBB C CAPSULES' release in the market are perfect. The kids who are in school are more exalted than before. Adults are more exposed to stress and pollution. Now, more than ever, they need that extra boost of energy and vitality.

The rainy days also require both kids and adults to have a stronger immune system to withstand diseases caused by the confused wet weather.

KREBB C Syrup and capsules are now available at Mercury Drugstores and other drugstores nationwide. For inquiries, please text the KREBB C hotline txt no. at 09085798215.

BUSINESS

One firm backs GSIS car insurance proposal

GOING AGAINST THE POSITION of fellow nonlife insurers, Mapfre Insular has backed proposals to make the Government Service Insurance System the sole provider of motor vehicle insurance in the country and to tap private firms to serve only as reinsurers.

Gloria Tolentino, senior vice president of Mapfre Insular, said the company agreed that the GSIS proposal would help address the problem of fake insurance policies being sold to motorists.

"There are really quite a number of fly-by-night operators, and they are tainting the credibility of the whole nonlife insurance industry," Tolentino said in an interview yesterday at the sidelines of Mapfre Insular's assembly of agents held in Makati City.

Tolentino said the GSIS proposal would not only protect policyholders from fraud, it would also make the process of securing insurance more convenient for them.

Under the GSIS proposal, individuals who will register their vehicles with the Land Transportation Office will automatically be given their GSIS-compulsory third party liability insurance.

Mapfre Insular, which is 75-percent owned by Spanish insurance firm Mapfre, claims to be the fifth biggest nonlife insurance firm in the country. It generated P1.17 billion in gross premiums collection in January to September this year, up 12.5 percent from that of the same period a year ago.

The GSIS proposal is being opposed by members of the Philippine Insurers and Insurance Associations (Piia), a group of nonlife insurance companies. In a recent press conference, officers of Piia described the GSIS plan to take over the motor insurance business as government intervention in private business.

Michelle U Rivera

BOC exceeds Sept. collection target

FCDU lending grew by 4.3% in 2nd quarter

By Dona C. Dantiz

LOANS EXTENDED BY THE banking system's foreign currency deposit units (FCDU) grew by a modest 4.3 percent to $4.6 billion in the quarter ending in June, compared with the previous quarter, as the US dollar rebounded against the peso in the second quarter, tempering the domestic market's appetite for foreign currency borrowing.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday reported that the FCDU loan book in the second quarter also expanded by 40.4 percent from that of the previous year, largely due to net loan availments by residents.

But growth in the second quarter slowed down from the 14.4-percent expansion seen in the first quarter.

The appreciation of the peso against the US dollar earlier encouraged borrowers to obtain foreign exchange funding for their requirements.

However, due to soaring food and fuel prices, and with the global financial market becoming more turbulent, the peso reversed its bullish trend starting in March this year, which, in turn, reduced foreign currency borrowings.

An FCDU is a unit of a local bank or a local branch of a foreign bank authorized by the BSP to engage in foreign exchange-denominated transactions, such as accepting foreign currency deposits and granting of foreign currency loans.

Those who availed of FCDU loans as of end-June were mostly enterprises earning foreign exchange or had foreign exchange requirements, such as for importations or offshore debt servicing.

Loans to commodity and service exporters accounted for 21 percent of the total FCDU loan portfolio, followed by public utility firms (19 percent), and producers/manufacturers, including oil companies (16 percent).

About 56 percent had availed of the long-term maturity payable over a term of more than one year, while 44 percent had a tenor of one year or less.

Loans to the private sector accounted for the bulk of 97 percent of FCDU loans, with the public sector representing the small remainder. Philippine residents took out 78 percent of the loans.

As of end-June, FCDU deposits accepted by the banking system amounted to $28.5 billion, for every dollar of FCDU deposits, the banks lent out about $0.25 at end-June. But this was already an improvement from the $0.21 seen by the end of March.

The relatively low loan-to-deposit ratio—against the local banking system's 75 percent ratio on peso-denominated accounts—showed that banks were still cautious in lending to other corporates given the foreign exchange risks.

During the Asian currency turmoil of 1997, which led to an unprecedented devaluation of the peso, many companies were unable because of their foreign debt burden.

Customs official cites peso's depreciation

By Michelle U. Rivera

HERALDO

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS EXCEEDED its revenue collection target in September, aided in part by the depreciation of the peso and higher-than-programmed collection of noncash duty payments by government agencies.

Preliminary data from the BOC showed that it collected P21.096 billion in September, exceeding the goal of P21.56 billion set for the month. The latest collection also marked a year-on-year growth from P19 billion in September last year.

Noncash revenue collection, which is mostly composed of duty payments by the National Food Authority for its rice imports, accounted for P5.02 billion of total BOC collections for September. Noncash payments were much higher than the P425 million expected for the month.

The BOC's performance in September brought total collections for the first nine months of the year to P191.43 billion, higher than the goal of P185.22 billion programmed for the period.

Of the collections made in the last nine months, noncash payments accounted for P59.58 billion. This was higher than the P5.63 billion expected for the period.

Because the NFA has to buy imported rice, which is still dutiable under the domestic market, the agency receives a tax subsidy from the government so that it can pay tariffs on its rice imports.

In granting the tax subsidy, which is a noncash form, the budget department has to issue a document to a taxpayer-agency—owned firm like the NFA, which uses the document to pay for taxes or import duties.

The tax subsidy is normally deducted from the bureau's budget of the government entity receiving the subsidy.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue and the BOC both include noncash payments in computing their revenue collections. Some legislators previously questioned this practice, saying that the inclusion of noncash payments tended to bloat the revenue agencies' collection performance.

But BIR and BOC officials said it was customary to include noncash payment in their collections. Collecting either cash or noncash, legally, the same effect on the part of the BIR and the BOC, they said.

Apart from noncash payments, the peso's performance also helped boost the BOC's collection so far this year.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales earlier said the depreciation of the peso to a level weaker than expected was a blessing in disguise as far as the BOC was concerned.

The peso closed at 46.817 against the US dollar in the last trading day of September, much weaker than the closing of 40.85 in mid-January.

When the government set the revenue collection target of the BOC, it assumed that the peso would hover between 42 and 43 against the greenback.

Depreciation of the peso help increase Customs collection because it makes imported goods more expensive in local currency terms.

Import tariffs are computed using the peso value of the imported goods.

Pacific Online revenue up 36% to P466.1M in first 9 months

By Elizabeth Tan-bo Lacson

PACIFIC ONLINE SYSTEMS CORP., THE online lottery system provider of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office in the Visayas and Mindanao, reported that its total revenue grew by 36 percent to P466.1 million in the first nine months of the year from that of the same period in 2007.

Pacific Online did not disclose the comparative figures of the previous year.

According to the lottery system provider, this figure indicated that PCSO lotto sales in the Visayas and Mindanao reached P6.7 billion.

"This marked improvement is attributable mainly to the successful roll-out of terminals which now total 1,311," Pacific Online chief financial officer Frederick Irving said in a disclosure to the stock exchange. "With the expected robust sales in the remaining months of the year, the company's sales performance may either sustain this significant growth or surpass it."

Lucky Circle Corp., a wholly owned indirect subsidiary of Pacific Online, which owns and operates lotto outlets at SM malls nationwide, is performing strongly for the company.

Lucky Circle has 69 lotto outlets at present and still growing in terms of market reach.

The company said PCSO is ready to launch its new batch of 20 million instant scratch tickets in time for the peak holiday season. Pacific Online sold out its 2008 batch, worth P400 million, three months ahead of schedule.

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(PSN-Oct. 4, 2008)

On October 19, 2008, the **Philippine Daily Inquirer** in partnership with **Philtrade Exhibits** will publish a supplement solely dedicated to the **three-day wedding expo** to be held at the Festival Supermall. This special will **showcase various wedding suppliers** such as **caterers, couturiers** and **virtually anything and everything related to WEDDINGS.**

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PROPERTY

Edited by Cesar D. Mangosing

High-rise havens rise in Mactan

By Charles E. Bahan

IF YOU HAPPEN TO BE ON Pedro Faura Street in Manila, there is an interesting showroom—located at the ground floor of Robinsons Place Residences' Tower 2—that tries to take you to another place, 600 kilometers away.

The showroom features two model units that will be offered by Avida, Robinsons Land Corp's upcoming master-planned community and leisure estate in Mactan Island, Cebu.

Each model unit features a unique interior design concept that leads one to a spacious balcony where one could imagine himself relaxing while getting completely

MORE B3 »

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- Gym
- Fitness station
- Children's play area
- Jogging path
- Fat-fit zone
- Putting green
- Reflexology path
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Marcco de Guzmare Jr.

I MISSED EXPERIENCING THE LOAF finals. Like thousands of other aficionados, I missed it because there were no more tickets available. Yes, I watched it on TV, but seeing it on screen against experiencing it live, just isn't the same ballgame. I've watched some games live before, both professional and university basketball games, and the intensity is certainly different from merely watching it on TV.

With an Ateneo-La Salle finals clinic such as the one last Thursday, the thrill and excitement involved are incomparable to any other local sport. Just imagine the reaction of the 40,000 crowd every time Norsey Bachar makes a block or when Jio Reyes makes a three-point shot! But enough of basketball, let's go on to the main point—my true color is definitely showing.

I just wished there had been more seats available. The event could have netted twice more than the maximum seating capacity of the big dome at 23,000. The dramatic Collosium, the country's "Big Dome," was built almost 50 years ago and was conceptualized when the total population was a mere one-fourth of what it is today. Now that we have a plethora of venues for events in sports, music, politics and even religious services, we still need to address this dearth of old. It seems to me that the time is ripe for a bigger one.

Envision a huge hall

I can envision a huge hall at the Mall of Asia area. I can only wish that there's a set aside of our forward-thinking real estate tycoons would initiate such scene. I learned that Cebu is planning to build a similar one. We keep building bigger and bigger exhibition halls to accommodate more product launches and seminar participants, such as the World Trade Center and SMX, but no theaters and arenas remain the same.

Some could argue that by getting too big, the audience's view suffers. This may be true, however, the situation is easily resolved by installing big screens at appropriate spots so that details of the national activity can be viewed and the intensity still experienced. The thrill is not just in watching shows live, but in experiencing it beside tens of thousands who share the same passion.

The Eraserheads concert attracted 70,000 spectators and, despite risk of rain and discomfort of heat, the organizers had to hold it on an open field, for lack of venue. Manny Pacquiao would be even more inspired if twice the number of his fans could witness his delivering those deadly blows. In a country that goes gaga over megastars and generous gains chew holes, we lack the venues to match them.

It's about time

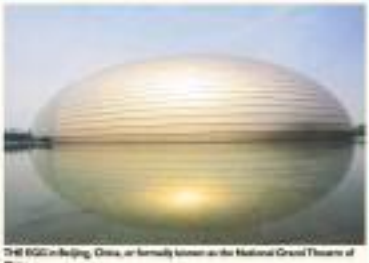
I believe it's about time we build a new mega venue. Beijing's new superstructure, their National Stadium, was erected next to the Tiananmen Square and nicknamed "the egg." Just a capacity of 91,000 seated spectators. Appropriately the ballarabium is also generated for short concerts. Just been screaming. Similarly, the national stadium of Malaysia can seat a crowd of 100,000.

It would be great for our national pride and reputation to have a comparable venue of our own, to host major concerts or fights of international stellar, wherein people from the Asian region can flock to watch. It would be a definite boost to our tourism industry.

The government can likewise spearhead the construction of such a venue. Aside from benefiting the tourist industry, the Filipino can eventually expect to avail of lower prices for first-class shows, since use of the venue will be amortized over the years.

The structure will generate both income and prestige for the country. It can even be an iconic structure, something that showcases the Filipino soul and expresses his vision. Truly, the need for a bigger venue is more than the bigger need to live a new, expressive native structure behind which the Filipino people can take flight now, it is a need for our Filipino astonishing, a common Filipino dream.

For your comments, please send e-mail to marcodeguzmanjr@yahoo.com.



THE EGG in Beijing, China, or formally known as the National Grand Theatre of China.

THIS Swiss town pleasantly transports weekend warriors into another world.

Brittany's thriving Swiss community

AFTER A HECTIC WORK WEEK AT THE capital's business district, thoughts of Manila's weekend woe turn immediately toward the South—to a thriving community where relaxation and rejuvenation is a way of life.

Monteich (ret) property developer Brittany Corp., a proud member of the country's largest landholders, Vera Land & Lifescapes Inc., has created a sanctuary in Tagaytay where rustic meets off and footwear is optional. Dubbed as a "swiss-inspired" development, here, one becomes a weekend essential to recharge for the coming week's challenges in the urban jungle.

Brittany developed the CrossWinds development not merely as an escape but a true oasis where one can rejuvenate both the body and the spirit. At 2,500 feet above sea level, CrossWinds is a 9.9-hectare masterplanned estate of prime Tagaytay land.

Rapid growth

Today, the community continues to thrive in CrossWinds. Weekenders are now enjoying the tranquil setting, subsidies is in its third summer homes or the Swiss Quaint-like Phases 1 and 2 of The Town are almost sold out and Brittany is now offering the 4.3-hectare exclusive mountain home site on the North side of Crosswinds called Mountain Ville.

Developed by the architect known name Lake Geneva, Mountain Ville offers lot cuts of 200 to 300 square meters. Buildings can choose from a quiet shape, mini shops, mini shops and double frontage lots. Only 73 lots would be made available.

Furthermore, the solid-set Tower 1 of Grand Quarter recently held its grand blessing. Construction of Tower 2 has already commenced and Brittany is now offering units. The Grand Quarter Tower 2 offers studio units and one- to three-bedroom residence. With a maximum of 12 units per floor, it allows residents much-needed privacy to enjoy a quiet morning or to appreciate nature's handiwork.

Units range from 30 to 200 sq m., giving clients a wider range of choices for greater flexibility in owning a space that would cater to their specific requirements. It also offers convertible units. Units studio in one-bedroom units or one-bedroom units to two-bedroom units without additional cost. Packages range from P1.2 million to P3.3 million.

Within the property, residents can enjoy invigorating days at the village pool. Leisurely strolls amid the lush pine tree-lined landscape, hiking through the natural slopes to take in fresh air and clear the mind of the work week's worries, a wellness enclave is available to residents in need of caring hands to knead those knotted muscles away.

"With the grand blessing of the Grand Quarter Tower 1, the commencement of the Grand Quarter Tower 2 and the Montreux Ville offerings, and the continued construction of the various amenities within the development, CrossWinds affirms Brittany's commitment to our visions of an unparalleled standard of living that exemplifies harmonious and luxury befitting the cosmopolitan Filipino," declared Brittany's Chief Operations Officer Mary Lee Sarillana.

STYLISH but relaxed interiors of the Grand Quarter Tower 2 model unit is perfect for both lounging around or cozying up.

Swiss sanctuary

Inspired by Swiss architecture, CrossWinds has literally created a sanctuary that stimulates and refreshes the five senses. The stunning chalets artfully adorned with architectural details are a treat for the eyes. With the reigning green, one can hear the sweet song of nature. The 8,000 plus trees that line the property bring the scent of the Swiss Alps to life. Organically-grown produce will be available at the Gourmet Village for consumption. Most of all, the modern conveniences of urban living are made within easy reach.

Brittany is a master-built real estate developer of innovative and creative lifescapes. Its eclectic and vibrant portfolio includes Rancillos, Georgia Club, Monte at Greenhills, EL Monte at Legaspi and Amvi at The Fort. With masterplanned developments steeped in character, stylistic and dramatic appeal, rich architectural details and excellent craftsmanship, it successfully and continuously reinvents the local real estate landscape.

The Beacon's record sales

LESS THAN A YEAR AFTER the luxurious high-rise residential development has been launched, The Beacon has sold more than 75 percent.

Edwin Bongco, vice president for marketing and sales, considers this a major achievement for The Beacon, the first project of Geo-Estate Development Corp. and New Pacific Resources Management. "For a new player and one known in the market, we did very well. This is more than what we expected. We are looking at a sell-out by the end of the year," he proudly says.

The success of the first tower is attributed to the attention to detail, ensuring that residents experience luxury consistency of fine living, delivering real value for money.

Distinguishing features

Modeled in the most sought after address for condominium dwellers, and this influx has led to a demand for more condominiums set up in the area. Comprising three towers which completed, The Beacon's distinguished from all Makati condominiums by its architectural elegance, exquisitely designed interiors and sleek amenities, yet targeted for the middle market.

"Our features and amenities are comparable with high-end developments but more affordable," Bongco shares. "We have been transparent in terms of project deliveries, timetable and benefits of living at The Beacon."

A visit to its showroom offers a sneak preview of how the units look like, giving the customer a sensation of high-rise living, whether it's a studio,

Redefining urban livin

MODERN HIGH-RISE LIVING that places equal emphasis on elegance, function and dynamic versatility characterizes the available spaces offered in The Exchange Regency, Multinational business/ fast-rising residential tower that is transversely redefining today's urban standards on luxury condominium living.

A glimpse of this 42-story architectural landmark's inherent possibilities was recently unveiled in The Exchange Regency showroom, with model units that are created with functional features, visual esthetics and the enigmatic allure of traditional living abed. Chosen to breathe life into the current interior needs are two of the country's most influential designers, Lee Calma-Design Inc. and Asuncion Barrogaza Inc.

THE EXCHANGE Regency offers sprawling units which is created

Minimalist layout

"The design firms came up with a minimalist layout that conforms to the modern theme of the tower, but is softened and made more in-

High-rise havens rise . . .

page B2

AMISA'S one-bedroom unit perfectly combines modern and classical design elements.

...ique place

...adowd, Amisa promises to be a unique place. ...ocated on a peninsula at the northeastern tip ...Marina island, the development will feature ...ree luxurious...two 18-storey, two 16-storey ...two eight-storey residential condominiums, a ...and events-gathering center.

...the cool blue and white color motifs that will ...minate each building structure pays tribute to ...anila's Gold Coast, a popular beach destina...

...he five-hectare development offers a com...anding view of Magallan Bay to the northwest ...the Cavitex Sea to the north, east and ...th.

...'s like living in a luxury high-rise surrounded ...the sea. Aside from such beautiful surround... you will also appreciate how Amisa will ...ectly balance modern amenities and the old ...rm of island living," described Raoul Lichau... ...ice senior unit marketing of RLC Residential ...ding Division.

...side from Amisa's 176-meter white, sandy ...h front, the development will also feature ...expansive pools (facing the beach), two-...lined bike and jogging paths, pocket parks, as ...ell as sports activity areas.

"At RLC's first high-end real estate venture in Cebu, the beach resort amenities and facilities within the development is set to raise the community living standard in the province," he said.

Lichauco added that with RLC's expertise in mid-size community development and hotel operations, Amisa promises to provide the perfect home as well as an ideal beach getaway for homebuyers and customers traveling require from the hustle of the city or those who wish reward or jumpstep after years of work in the city or living abroad.

...After all, Amisa is a Sanskrit term that refers to ...an object of enjoyment, according to Lichauco.

One Central continues trailblazing sales success

SINCE ITS LAUNCH EARLY THIS year, Megaworld Corp.'s mega ambitious condominium project in Metro...One Central...has continued its trailblazing run. Now, about 90 percent of its units are already sold. And it's still raking in huge sales, especially with the launch of its new avant-garde showrooms at the project site. The only confirms that it is indeed "The Philippines' Utmost Address of Success."

"We are delighted at our target market's overwhelming response, but I can't say that we are surprised at how successful it became. After all, One Central is truly a grand address with a prime location and amenities that measure up to, after residents' every need. It is an investment well worth its price tag, as can be gleaned with a rush to our new showrooms," said Hiyasmin M. Tee, Megaworld's Marketing and project head Clifford Legaspi.

A FOREST park on the San Gil Puyat Avenue side of One Central gives residents a welcome respite right after they step out of the concrete jungle.

Just five minutes away.

Value for their money

According to Legaspi, buyers of One Central units come from the most exclusive addresses—affluent entrepreneurs, lawyers, doctors, high-powered executives and investors who see enormous value for their money.

"Sure enough with One Central, they will be getting more than they bargained for. The word "grand" is actually an understatement. Located at the corner of San Gil Puyat Avenue and Dela Costa-Geronimo Street, One Central is right at the heart of the Makati financial district. The Philippine Stock Exchange, top banks and offices on Ayala Avenue are mere minutes away. Restaurants and other places of leisure are also very near with the Greenbelt Mall

THE NEW showroom gives a preview of the highly exclusive One Central lifestyle.

Welcome respite

An iconic Art Deco façade inspired by the former Insular Building in New York and opulent lobby interiors lined with Old English artworks are the height of luxury in style, in every sense of the word. Its floor-to-ceiling blue curtain glazes against the dark skies. With its lush gazebo, flowing plants and water features, the Forest Park amidst affords the eye with a welcome respite from the concrete and glass that fill the streets.

At 7th floor is filled with all the amenities to elite residents can ever need—lap pools to conference rooms, library to a mini theater, exercise studio to bar lounges. Those who want to escape the stress of the corporate world will find a haven in its spa and sauna rooms. There is no need to even worry about the kids. They will be kept entertained in One Central's day-care center and game rooms.

Each unit is even designed with the elite in mind—from its state-of-the-art security system to its plush furnishings. Each unit comes fully furnished, by the way, so residents only have to actually move in upon turnover. Absolutely no worries there, says Legaspi.

Truly unique

But what makes One Central truly unique is its 24-hour concierge service that sets them anywhere from luggage delivery or reservation of tickets to restaurants to the procurement of tickets for a show. It also has its own housekeeping service, which will take care of your cleaning problems. Each resident is definitely pampered on the lab.

"Perhaps what makes One Central a success is the quality of the amenities and services that it offers. Residents will definitely not be disappointed. They will get the first-class treatment that befits their stature in life," Legaspi noted.

He also extended an invitation to investors and other A-listers to visit the One Central showroom at the project site to check out Megaworld's new one-bedroom model unit.

To start living your life in luxury at the One Central, check out www.megaworldcorp.com.

...beyond expectations for first tower

...bedrooms left unit, two-...room loft unit...penthouse unit ...ree unit.

...rious lifestyle

...e Beacon offers a luxury ...lifestyle which includes ...national facilities like 4-lit... ...ter resort style pump... ...ming pool, 20-meter private cinema, 225-sqm hi-level gym with sauna and massage areas, meditation garden and gazebo. However, it is the luxury of space and strategic location that makes The Beacon stand out from the rest.

Shangrix recognizes that The Beacon's prime location on One Chino Roces Avenue corner Arnaiz Avenue is what draws a large number of end-users.

As Shangrix assesses, "It is practical to have a condo at The Beacon. You live near your office and have more time for family and non-gasoline expenses as well? The Beacon, after all, is practically walking distance to life's essentials—schools, hospitals, churches, offices, and commercial establishments.

Offering a fresh approach to city living, The Beacon spells a true definition of comfort and luxury enveloped in a modern, integrated community. With sun lovers ready and set and rare to go, expect only high-quality living and convenience at The Beacon. For inquiries, you may visit their showroom at the site.

...g spaces at The Exchange Regency

...e of tastefully designed condo homes ...ed with functional esthetic features.

...orating with the generous use of ...details, proportions, textures and ...colors," said Nobleland Marketing ...CM Jesus G. Ureta.

...The one bedroom unit, which is particularly designed for a younger acroplant, has bright and airy living room made more dramatic with the use of cool colors—cream and brown. Aside from installing hanging lamps as classy lighting fixtures, the unit is also cryamed with simplicity crisp lines and more spacious floor areas that can perfectly accommodate cuddle lifestyles and even small group gatherings and entertainments. Balancer between function and esthetics is also achieved in the kitchen area, which instead of being partitioned apparently was made to be part of the unit's living space. Thus, the owner is introduced to open counters and unified color schemes that blend naturally into the overall design.

The two-bedroom unit, which is more attuned to the living requirements of mature couples with matured kids, is made with memory retained ...

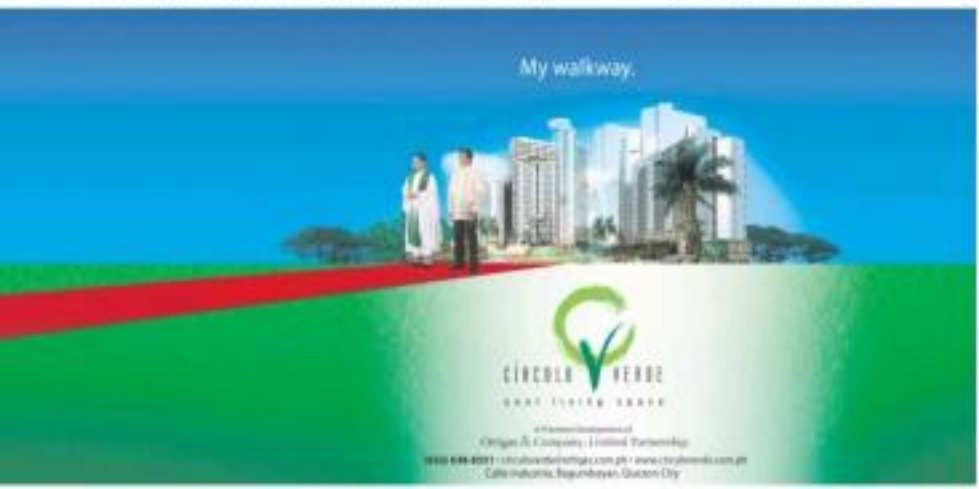
...touches. The spacious and well-guarded kitchen area that pleasantly complements the charming dining section is but a fitting tribute to the family that loves to share meals with the tantalizing quality time together. For the children's bedroom, playful introduction of blue, green and yellow hues are offered to cheerful contrast to the predominantly cream tones scheme. A double decker and functional sofa beds, accessories, were placed as cordial sleeping venues for the young ones.

Reflect opulent lifestyle

Modest cuts for the one-bedroom loft and combined units, meanwhile, reflect the opulent lifestyle of those who want to maximize the advantages of more livable space. The two-bedroom loft couples, then, height and modernism through its ample living and dining spaces and ... as the same time provides more privacy as the second level serves as one's private haven.

Accentuating the residential units' functional living spaces is the generous integration of elements of nature. Soft, natural light rays are drawn in by draperies which serenely frames the wide windows and vertically complemented the units' high-ceiling features. For a classy floor treatment, neatly sorted underneath the meticulously wooden furniture pieces are plush fitted carpets that add warmth and sophistication.

Developed by Asya Design Haven, The Exchange Regency, which is scheduled for completion and turnover in December 2010, is set to join on a three-corner property at the convergence point of the Exchange Road, Meralco Avenue and Jade Drive.



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Next pit stop: Ho Chi Minh

Now here's a smart phone if there ever was one: the latest Samsung innov8 puts the 'mobile' in mobile in a race around Vietnam

LEARNING a traditional Vietnamese dance

By Tobi Diez

THE YEAR IS 2008, and war has broken out in Vietnam. Okay, it was more of a battle, really—a friendly battle between Southeast Asian frenemies in a race around the city of Ho Chi Minh for the Samsung Amazing Challenge tour.

Each team, composed of journalists from five different countries around Asia, were armed with nothing more or less than weapons of mass distraction: the fascinating Innov8, the latest smartphone on the industry scene. Truly, this phone is a lot smarter and perhaps even smarts better-looking, than any of us.

And what better way to road test the Innov8 than allowing us five-time Vietnam visitors to dodge armies of motorcyclists on the streets and navigate the new city ruts it—thus putting the "mobile" in the mobile phone.

Team Philippines launched out Inner Amazing Racers as we zipped around the larger Vietnamese city without maps, and only using the phone's built-in GPS system.

True to Amazing Race tradition, each pit stop posed a challenge for us to get to know Innov8. Thankfully, it didn't include forcing us eat one of eight biggest insect delicacies.

Instead, we assembled wholesome, learned traditional Vietnamese cyclical dances, learned orchestral Viet-namese outlaw, and used monster out of charcoal egg shells and accessed a few locals at the Ben Thanh market to take their photos.

After taking a photograph of our friendly cab together, humility is attempted to exchange his old mobile phone for my "Grandmaman." It's perhaps the best nickname for the innov8, its most outstanding feature is its built-in eight-megapixel digital camera.

Eight unsuspected is precisely captured Ho Chi Minh's vibrant street life, with its riotous advertising boasters such as an image mobilizer, auto-panorama shot, with dynamic range and face detection. Other features of the Innov8 "Travelmate" that would have driven James Bond mad with technology include Wi-Fi for easy web surfing, a video cam, Real Player and a DivX feature that can store dozens of DVD movies.

Now that is pure awesomeness.

Next pit stop: the Ho Chi Minh City Museum for the Solemn Vietnam Revival for the biggest photo taken by a mobile phone.

Renowned and well-decorated Vietnamese photographer Hoang Thang (and Chi Samsung Innov8 to make history with the "Dang Xoe" ("Old Shape"), captured at Vietnam's tallest landmark, Bao Mon. At a special recording ceremony in the Ho Chi Minh Museum, the eight-megapixel camera was revealed to have an impressive size of 8.0Mm X 1.13m.

Although Team Philippines ended the Amazing Challenge top spot to Team Malaysia by a mere two minutes, we were practically Vietnam with after the whirlwind mobile photo tour. Picture message sent!

PHOTOS taken with the Innov8's 8-megapixel camera

SAMSUNG Innov8

AMAZING face-eye challenge in Vietnam

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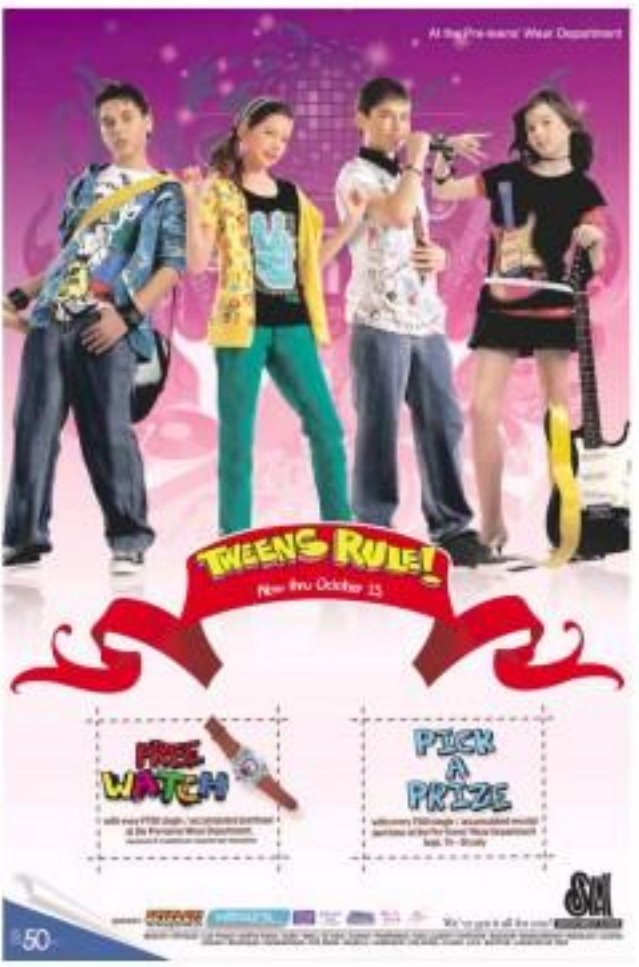


The rise of the Ick Girl

Call her 'Self-ebutante'—'Gossip Girl' mimic and Paris Hilton copycat in Third-World Manila

SOMEWHERE WITHin the hairline crack between these ltic and society, there breeds a new species nourished by a sprawnfed of sugar and a tab of acid.

Less discriminatory peoople have termed this fascinating new life form as the "Celebutante." I think she label "Self-ebutante" would be more apt, given the "buy-pulse" nature of our local entertainment world.

One member of the phylum undercast recently inscribe myem of a prize conference, magnanimously disembowing girls for the press—no doubt superphoned, of course! She was wearing a Pepto- framed pink lacy dress and was frustrated all over, like Betty Johnson's Christmas tree, with crystals and pearls.

Like a counterfeit Louis Vuitton Monogram Jokes bag in the backroom of a dingy Binondo mall, the Self-ebutante was peddling herself desperately in the real thing.

Why, here's a true blue Third World heiress who lives a few of her personal likes as "shopping, painting, St. Tropez, bags, pearls, wine, Chanel, Hermès and babies."

Wait a minute. Did I just say "Third World heiress?" Isn't Third World? Guess there really is such a thing. Indeed, if life gives you celebutantes, ask your papa to make vahanami juice!

A befuddled entertainment journalist at the press con quizzed how Lance are saying, "I'm not like one of those ick girls who don't like mens. Eh, I love boys. I don't get icky hugging mens." And thereby proceeded to give everyone around the press table a brag.

Sigh. You know you hate her. And she is insufferable, yes—funnier than the main protagonists of gladiator shows in department stores these days. Their ilk is nearly recognizable by their distinguishing characteristics: Those punks of Blair Waldorf cookie-cutter(s) have appropriated the city's "It" spots as their own party dish. They're bedecked in designer dresses and bootie boolbands, displaying their command of the English vocabulary with the solicitous use of the word "fabulous," and barely "fe-ouch!"

The Phylum Self-ebutante's most recognizable physical attribute is the strained pouty lip, which is liberated on cue at the flash of a paparazzi photographer's camera. It is there homage, of course, to—or their abuse of solidarity with—Paris Hilton, Carrie Bradshaw and the female cast of "Gossip Girl."

Except when they do the signature pout, they look like they are sucking on a "chupon." Which is just as likely since only a decade ago, they were still suckling on milk bottle nipples, anyway.

'Rags to riches'

Like a recurring nightmare with a sadder soundtrack, there are now local TV shows that are blatant "Gossip Girl" ripoffs, replete with Kerwood & Girl blueprints, cookie-cutter gushing into the swimming pool scenes, and such awe-inspiring dialogue as, "Have you I've been mga ito (when story ok?"

Or how about this other impossible lyric—"The critic—...dreamin' parsed...the baddie."

Yet those aren't the lines in the show's script that frighten me the most. It is this one, said by one of the bad characters in the show's promo: "Money and power go hand in hand. Both my cars be achieved through power, and power through money. Having sehi se ako ng daddy ko."

Who the heck is the scriptwriter scaffolding this nonsense? Exactly like those cars, the dangerous because you expect them enough times to jar one unquestionable young mind, who can't tell the difference between plum and prune, and you have a future corrupt government official right there. So much for trying to cultivate meritocracy among the youth, huh?

Instead, this are only laboratory the size of an entomology. Call me overly idealistic, but I'd like to think—or hope—that these teenagers today have enough sense to tell the difference between class and crass.

If there is any lesson to cheer on with this current Self-ebutante evolution, it is that Imelda Class does not presuppose class, and that money can actually cheapen people. The true hallmark of wealth, after all, is in dignified actions and words.

Now for a few parting words (here your grandma's lecture). Dear Self-ebutante, after gawking in a talk show, she told another journalist, "I think people really like me because they were all laughing!"

Aww, honey. Lucky like all that. Future inheritors would can't buy you the skill of telling the difference between laughing with and being laughed at. JEDDY

Style spoofing

Five of the silliest trends around

Text by Bianca Consunji
Photos by Cyrus Pangcoban

"Fashion is a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months." —Oscar Wilde

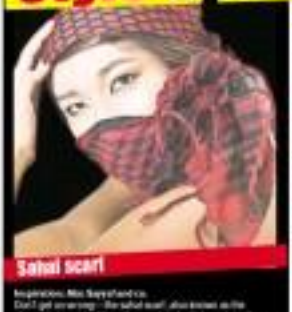
MAYBE. THEY SAY IT'S A matter of recycling trends—yesterday's lifestyle dwindles pauls might just be the next big thing. Thought you'd never see MC Hammer pants make a comeback? Look again, the person sitting beside you just might be wearing the confined into (bum pants, baggy or tight?) staple of the '90s.

The beauty of fashion is that just about anything can be made to look good, given the right photographer and model. But that is also precisely its drawback—even the most fashion-conscious can look great on a wealth-model under dramatic lighting. But on ordinary people on ordinary days...sure, that's a different story.

We've all be individual fashion sense. If you actually like Hammer pants and shoulder pads, more power to you. But if you're wearing them because everyone else is, chances are, you'll be burning photos of yourself in cringeworthy

Super presents five of the silliest trends to come our way in quite a while. Trust us—a year from now, you won't believe you actually wore these things.

E-mail the author or heroes at consunji@yahoo.com



Sahal scarf

Inspiration: Miz Sayyaf and co.
Don't get us wrong—the sahal scarf...also known as the shemagh, or not traditionally associated with terrorists, domestic. It's also hard to disassociate the image of a smiling Kamonder Robot wearing a checkered scarf with this trend. Since the war I doesn't really look good on anyone—and we wonder why people pair scarves with flimsy tank tops in a tropical country like ours—you might as well go all out and look ridiculous by pairing the sahal scarf with sunglasses.

The boyfriend look

Inspiration: Mary Kate Olsen
The boyfriend look, popularized by stateswide and popularized by Mary-Kate Olsen, has arguably been the must-have look for the past couple of months. While there's nothing wrong with borrowing your boyfriend's sweater for public, casual look, there's something definitely wrong if you can be mistaken for your brother from behind.

Colored jeans

Inspiration: Crayons
It started with Topshop's Kate Moss collection. The line featured bright red jeans that looked like jumbo hotdogs when worn and with other proportions started wearing them. You would've thought that was enough, but no, retail bosses started making them in every color of the rainbow.

Gladiator sandals

Inspiration: Spartacus
Do you want to look like a gladiator from the golden days of Rome. However, those ridiculously high gladiator sandals can cost an arm and a leg, so make your own! Relive the days of the bloodthirsty Roman empire by going rugged all the way—all you need is a little ingenuity. Simply attach a length of rope to your trusty sandals, walk around with a ferocious scowl, and you've got the authentic gladiator look down pat.

The 'Blair' band

Inspiration: Gossip Girl's Blair Waldorf
Oh No. It looked cute. But the headbanded look based makes brain injury look like manicured girl bosses. It's quite disconcerting to see twenty-somethings decked out in bows large enough to wrap a washing machine. If you must wear one, keep the bows small and varied.

Photos and more

By Bianca Consunji

THERE ARE PHONE CAMeras—the standard issue, will-do for quick snapshots variety, and there are great phone cameras. You know the type: they're the ones that can replace the point-and-shoot slumber in your bag.

The Sony Ericsson C902 Cybershot phone definitely falls in the latter category, with easy-to-use features that can give bonafide cell phone models a run for their money.

The C902 is fairly straightforward, with a sleek, simple design that doesn't indicate the high-tech features it has in store for users. It doesn't even look like a camera phone, there's no sliding lens cover in sight. However, the 5-megapixel camera of the C902 is actually hidden under a sliding mechanism (all you have to do is tug on the upper portion of the phone), which—contrary to its streamlined design and prevents any unwanted photos or video recordings.

Sony Ericsson C902

The camera of the C902 features a range of auto-focus modes that include macro shooting, Beauty, face detection and a Smile Shutter that can also be used for shooting videos—all at a touch screen interface. Avid bloggers can also use the gadget to upload their blogs with the Photoblog feature, so you can quickly upload photos and text combinations.

A 1 gigabyte memory card also ensure that you can take hundreds of snaps on the road. If your need to send data to your computer, the unit's Bluetooth and USB interfaces are quicker than most cell phones, especially if you're using an Apple computer.

The Cybershot images come out sharp and clear, especially under natural light. The Xenon flash ensures that you can still take photos with your friends even under the dim light of a nightclub, while the face detection feature makes your faces pop out from a cluttered background. The S-Pict option allows you to view your photos with swipe and various backgrounds transitions similar to MS PowerPoint.

If you use your camera primarily to take photos of yourself (or your friends), then the C902 is a great enhancer for your cyber-presence. But if there's more to the C902 to than a good camera. You can also easily access, send e-mail, and download games into your phone—without significant hi-dowsing down the phone.

It's mainly low, so if you're clumsy and are prone to dropping your phone, you can be sure that it won't fall to pieces immediately.

All in all, the C902 is ideal for the reluctant techie. It's filled with features you don't know you needed, but actually do.

Smart phone that can enrich your life

By Raquel P. Gomez

DIGITAL DEVICES and Wireless Internet, which allow mobile consumers to communicate and be in touch constantly with friends and family and business associates, are already the essentials of today's living. Smart phones, high-megapixel digital cameras, and ultramobile PCs are just some of these essential devices.

However, some devices go beyond that definition by providing an enriching experience to the consumer.

Samsung's new high-end camera phone the SGH i8510 Innov8 is one such device. This multimedia slider phone is not only a feature-packed smart phone with great wireless functionalities but a vanity-like digital camera as well.

The look of the black metal-finish device is already similar to the appearance of many point-and-shoot digital cameras. It has big camera lens with auto focus and prominent flash. The side of the device holds the dedicated shutter button and a button for quick access to camera or video recording function and the photo and video album.

In fact, the i8510 Innov8 is the first commercially available camera phone that boasts of 8-megapixel capability.

Functioning solely as a digital camera, the i8510 Innov8 takes good pictures with great details and colors. Resolution for 8-megapixel photo is at 3264 x 2448 pixels.

Similar to independent digital cameras, the phone's camera function can do auto-matic panoramic shooting, face detection, smile detection, and even blink detection.

The camera also offers digital image stabilizer and a wide dynamic range, which is used to lighten up shadows in high-contrast modes. The general setting of the camera can be configured for such features like anti shake, extended digital zoom, shutter sound, contrast, saturation, and sharpness. Photos can also be geo tagged, or automatically be placed with GPS coordinates.

ISO settings can also be configured (from 50 up to 800 ISO) as well as metering options (matrix, spot or center weighted). Aside from macro shot feature, the camera offers red-eye reduction, a timer, white balance and options for lighting, different effects like sepia, black and white, or negative.

For video function, the camera can record videos at 30 fps (frames per second) for VGA quality, and 120 fps for QVGA quality.

Think about the possibilities this do-it-all phone can offer to the user, particularly in distributing ideas to others. With this device, you can take a high-resolution video or photo of scenic, wirelessly upload and email it fast to peers at broadband speed, or you can do a direct presentation by hooking up this device directly to a TV or projector.

As a smart phone, the i8510 Innov8 runs on Symbian 9.3 mobile operating system with 360 3rd edition UI. With a Symbian device, the user can easily access applications that are on standby mode on the screen. The shortcuts on standby mode include programs, calendar, music player, FM radio, and personalization features (profiles, themes, wallpaper, speed dial, etc.).

Other nice applications the i8510 Innov8 has include a DivX player and office tools like QuickWord, Adobe PDF reader, currency converter, Zip, notes, and smart card reader (application that reads business cards). It also offers Sns2u (for Web chat and Web social networking functions), Yahoo! Go, EMs, EA Sports and other easily accessible Web-based apps and services.

The i8510 Innov8 has a sliding flat-metal keypad that offers nice feel and look. The large infinite-looking 2.6 inch LCD display (16 million colors) is framed by a black shiny case. The D-cast and optical touch pad located below the display to access most used apps makes this device a stand-out. The sensitive D-pad and the optical touch pad provide fluid like manageability of the icons on the display.

This smart phone goes beyond the call and contacts functionality as it offers GPS (global positioning system) that helps user find directions and places. The phone has a built-in GPS receiver with A-GPS function, Bluetooth with A2DP, Wi-fi with DLNA certification, HSDPA (high-speed downlink packet access) at 7.2 Mbps, 3.5 audio jack, TV-out, a universal micro-USB port, and expansion slot for a micro SD (up to 8 GB).

The Samsung i8510 is most already offers the digital essentials the consumer of today needs in just one small device that can almost does everything.

(SRP: P30,000 for the 8 GB variant and P36,000 for the 16 GB variant).

Photos by Eugene Alvarez

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Big fat geek star

The Office's Ed Helms exchanges anger for pure geek love

THUNDER ROAD

James Gabrillo

BEGINNING WITH A FAT BOY behavior, Ed Helms is singing his way into the hearts of the TV viewing public via "The Office." While "The Daily Show" alum exploits his talent for laughs on the popular series as recovering angry man Andy Bernard, Helms is all business when it comes to letting the people hear him sing.

"Music has always been a huge part of my life," says Helms. "I've been playing guitar and banjo fairly obsessively for the last 20 years. I sing through high school and the occasional theatrical bent and then, like in college, I went deeper in a couple of bluegrass bands. When I moved to New York City I moved in very close friends from school instead dorm and we just played on a lot and that exists until this day."

Before Helms moved to Los Angeles, Lonesome Ben...ubuds, features Helms on guitar, his friggs on bass, and Jacob Tilove on mandolin...frequented New York haunts.

"We just had a gig a week and had ups. We dabble around here and there. It's an unattainable pursuit, but it's incredibly fun. And to be able to make music with two of my best friends is incredible. I am so grateful for that," says Helms.

It was his frequent singing and harmonizing that Helms believes might have separated him from the crowd in his early days on "The Daily Show."

"It was this running joke with all the segment producers. The editor would be like, 'Oh, Jesus. Helms is singing again.' They stopped putting them into the segments for a while. But sometimes it was just too good a moment to pass up. I loved belting out big, stupid musical numbers at the drop of a hat," Helms shares.

Beyond his self-professed love of Broadway musicals (as referenced on "Late Night with Conan O'Brien"), the Oberlin College grad boasts an extensive and eclectic taste in music. "It's a pretty wide swatch. It goes from Metallica to Yanni and everything in between," he says. "Sarah Silverman either listening to music or playing music in my band in some form or another, or singing to the brainstorms of all the people around me."

Cafuerte

Case in point, his character's self-retended, one-man, beat-poet, a-cappella style "Pocket Rocks" sing from to one of the episodes of "The Office." Helms believes it is scenes like his which makes millions of viewers search this show every week.

"I think that it resonates with people because whether or not you work in that type of office, we constantly confront awkward situations," Helms says. "It's fun to watch someone else go through it for a change. For me, it's cathartic to see that we all act like jackasses sometimes. There's a show that celebrates that."

And everyone is celebrating along with "The Office" staff—except for alumni from Cornell. Helms says that his fictional alma mater hasn't even sent him a sweatshirt yet in honor of his weekly pledges to the Ivy League school.

"That's really funny. They haven't sent me anything," Helms laughs. "To be honest, I don't know if the Cornell students are all that happy at my portrayal of a Cornell alumnus. We'll see, maybe I'll get an honorary degree in douchebaggery."

To soothe some of the uneasiness, Helms says, fans of "The Office" can expect a tender, gentler Andy in the newest season. "Pay anger, according to Helms, has washed away and, in return, love has come flooding in.

"It's been a really fun show to very personal for both me and, I think, the people who do the writing in terms of who Andy is," Helms explains. "Initially Andy's anger was very much his. It gave everyone a chance to see the worst and see what felt right. For me, it was done early on that the show was receptive for improvisation. So that gave me a chance to influence how Andy developed—so add a little Ed Helms jelly to the sandwich."

With a supporting part in his mid-life career threat Carell's "Evan Almighty" last year and a leading role in "Drew Shaw" (with fellow Muppet), the 35-year-old Helms is quickly becoming one of Hollywood's bankable supporting heavyweights.

"It's funny. I'm kind of working around the clock. No eating, no sleeping, no exercising. All I do is memorize lines! Well and it seems to keep me going," says Helms. "It's absolutely mind-blowing, but in the best way. And it's incredibly exciting. I am very ambitious, sometimes to the detriment of my own sanity."

Speaking of his and accounting experiences, Helms is carving some of his own [illegible] with a Dunder Mifflin motif during his downtime on the set. "Currently, I wanted nothing 'Star Wars' spare credits out of all five episodes. I have a nice little menagerie started. I have an X-wing fighter and a T-Wing fighter," Helms reveals.

"The X-wing is made out of paper clips and paper clips. It's pretty detailed. I painted it with White Out. I'm constantly begging the props department for bits and scales supplies. If you look carefully in certain episodes, you might see them on my desk."

"Suddenly, I feel like I'm not fit for an interview for your next version," admits Helms.

"I feel like between the banjo and the 'Star Wars' arts and crafts, I may be the biggest geek ever interviewed for this newspaper. And I wear it with pride. I still think I am one of my jock who comes my way."

This season, hoarding is back in style.

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Swingfest at Plaza Musica
October 3, 7pm to 10pm
Featuring Spazzfellowzz Show, Manila Pinto Confidential and Brass Monkeys

Mall Hours

October 3 & 4
10am to 11pm

October 5
10am to 10pm

Fitness, the UAAP way

By Patrick Leonard M. Maya
26 correspondent

IN TODAY'S WORLD WHERE life is spent spending through the fast lane, stress is normal and fast food takes the place of home-cooked, healthy food, staying fit is a tall order.

So how does one escape the unhealthy route and head toward the path to well-being, even in small but significant ways? We talked to some athletes from the country's top universities and asked for some tips in order to help 26 readers achieve a healthy lifestyle.

Chris Tiu

Chris Tiu, 23

Shooting Guard and team captain, Ateneo Blue Eagles
Course: Applied Mathematics (second degree)

Describe your regular day. I go to class in the morning, then plunge into three or four hours of training in the afternoon. Our training consists of weight lifting, jogging and ball practice.

What does your diet consist of? Basically it's a balanced meal. I eat rice, fish, veggies and fruit.

What are your no-no's when it comes to food? Fatty food is definitely a no-no for me. Eating oily food has a bad effect on my game.

What benefits can one get if he/she gets into your sport? What whole body will be developed. From shoulders (because of shooting) to upper body strength—down to the legs (because of the heavy sprinting up and down the court).

Do you have any motto or philosophy that you live by as an athlete? Avoid anything that will not be beneficial to you.

Regular or diet soda? I don't drink soft drinks.

Advice for people who want to get fit. Getting fit and healthy is a lifestyle. You don't go down overnight; it really takes time. You need to eat right, avoid staying up late, and once you get down, you have to maintain it.

Denise Tan

Denise Tan, 20

Describe your regular day. I go in class early in the morning then training at around 4:30 p.m. which will last up to four hours. We do a lot of sweating, push-ups, sit-ups, jogging and ball exercises before each training.

What does your diet consist of? My diet includes a lot of rice, since I need a lot of energy to burn, together with meat and vegetables.

What are your no-no's when it comes to food? Definitely no pies, cakes and chocolates for me.

What benefits can one get if he/she

ONE OF THE WORLD'S SEXIEST MEN BARES HIS SECRET.

Actor Dingdong Dantes was recently named one of the 21 Sexiest Men in the World by E! Entertainment Television. He is the only Filipino who made it to the list which included the world's sexiest male celebrities such as soccer superstar David Beckham, rugby player Dan Carter of New Zealand, French actor Gilles Marini, actor-model Michael Lewis of Israel and singer Kostas Martakis of Greece.

So, what's the secret behind Dingdong's amazing body? Exercise, proper diet and BeloShape®, a clinically painless, zero-downtime, NON-SURGICAL BODY CONTOURING SYSTEM that utilizes the power of newer generation ultrasound technology. The system produces pressure changes in the area around the fat cells that eventually makes the fat cells burst. The fragmented fat contents are then naturally eliminated by the body's lymphatic system. Most patients report an average reduction of 4 -10 cms in body circumference after only a single session.

Dingdong owes to the dramatic change in his body brought about by BeloShape®. It helped him achieve his incredibly toned body with far less effort.

For more information or inquiries on how BeloShape® can work for you, please call the Belo Medical Group help desk at 844-2930 or visit its website at www.belomed.com, or e-mail at info@belomed.com.

BeloShape® is available at Belo Medical Plaza in Makati. The clinic has six other branches in Manila – Ilustre's in Makati, Fronoma and Tomas Morato in Quezon City, Greenhills in San Juan, Podium in Ortigas and Westgate in Alabang – plus a booking facility in Iloilo.

Graphics Design Aldez Joshua Cotic

A weekly directory of the country's best establishments

Where to Stop Where to Go

Microtel Davao's anniversary treat

EXPERIENCE UNPARALLELED COMfort and convenience at Microtel Inn and Suites Davao! Book now and avail of special rates for as low as P2,500 per night in celebration of its first year anniversary. This is inclusive of breakfast and is good for 2 persons. As an added treat, enjoy 20 percent discount on massage services and spa freebies when you dine in the hotel's partner establishments. This promo is valid on Oct. 6-12 only.

Designed with comfort and functionality in mind, Microtel Davao features ultra-spacious, approximately 21-sqm cable TV, complimentary breakfast and free-flowing coffee in the lobby. It also has function rooms for groups requiring venues for meetings, conventions and social gatherings. Strategically situated in Damosa Gateway Complex, Microtel Davao is within close proximity to cinema and commercial establishments and is 10 minutes away from the airport.

Microtel Inn and Suites is an international chain of hotels with 200+ open and under construction worldwide including 30 in the Philippines (located in Baguio, Batangas, Boracay, Cabanatuan, Cavite, Davao, Manila, Tarlac and soon to open in Butuan and SM Mall of Asia). All Microtels in the Philippines are managed by Microtel Development Corp., the hospitality arm of the Phinma Group. For inquiries, call (SDN) 7-777, or (092) 233-2893, e-mail info@microtelphilippines.com or log on to www.microtelphilippines.com

Ormoc Villa Hotel aims to please

MANY OF YOU COME TO ORMOC CITY, NOT ONLY to discover the beauty of this historical city but also for business purposes. Ormoc Villa Hotel will satisfy your expectations and requirements, with its advantageous location close to the city center. It is the wish of all the employees of Ormoc Villa Hotel to provide you with top quality services and thus help you to have a happy and satisfying stay at the hotel.

Rooms are spacious and well equipped to meet the needs of every traveler. Enjoy a dip in the swimming pool, take an evening stroll through the garden, or enjoy a freshly brewed cup of coffee at the Cascade Coffee Shop. The hotel also has a grand ballroom, 2 function rooms, games room, and playground for children.

Welcome and enjoy your stay!

PLANTATION Bay continues to actively participate in environmental activities that contribute to the environment, and the community, as part of its way of giving back. Staff members led by general manager Oliver Belaramina (center) join the Alay Lakad 2008, which registered over 300,000 participants to raise funds for the scholars of the Cebu Alay Lakad Foundation Inc.

East meets west Oktoberfest at The Sulo Hotel

THE TRADITIONAL BEER DRINKING FESTIVAL is made bigger as The Sulo Hotel brings together the fusion of Filipino and German celebrations (21360-kanlaon). Avail of the 6-in-1 San Miguel beer in a bank of promos and enjoy your favorite Pinoy pulutan for free, or the buy 4, get 1 cantidad free promo of Erdinger beer in a bank of spicy German beer and get a free appetizer German cold cuts. Plus, enjoy San Miguel beer at 60 percent off and Erdinger beer at 20 percent off during happy hour from 5:00 p.m. to 8 p.m. There's more, get exclusive in-room invited editions premium items from San Miguel beer and Erdinger. Dealsite is located at the mezzanine level of The Sulo Hotel, Quezon Ave., Quezon City. For inquiries, call (02)929-1061 or log on to the website at www.sulohotel.com.ph.

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Financial Hotel Directory

Fitness...

Pretzeque D1

gets into your sport? Upper body strength will be developed, including the shoulders and triceps, about we do a lot of spiking and blocking.

Do you have any mantra or philosophy that you live by as an athlete? Perseverance. Pinagtyan lang talaga. You need to be patient, know you have to learn a lot of things like spiking, jumping, etc.

Regular or diet soda? Regular

Sinful craving? Cakes.

Advice for people who want to get fit: You cannot compromise exercise. You should have the discipline to work out regularly. Like exercise 30-45 minutes a day. And you should really watch what you eat.

LUICA Dacanay

Luica Dacanay, 22

Team captain, UP women's swimming team
Four-time UAAP women's MVP and two-time UAAP Athlete of the Year
Course: BS Family Life and Child Development

Describe your regular day. After classes in the morning and early afternoon, I go through a three-hour training starting at 3 p.m. Our training includes jogging, weight lifting and an eight-kilometer swim, that's around 320 laps.

What does your diet consist of? I just eat three complete and balanced meals a day and make sure that I don't get hungry in any way, because it will really have an effect on my conditioning.

What are your no-no's when it comes to food? Only until then food. It's okay for me on cake some pastry now to a while, since I get to burn them quickly.

What benefits can one get if he/she gets into your sport? Aside from the diet-pilates, you will get to develop your shoulders, your shoulders and stamina.

Do you have any mantra or philosophy that you live by as an athlete? You've got to have what: positive doing. Feel your sport and have fun.

Regular or diet soda? Diet

Sinful craving? Cakes.

Advice for people who want to get fit: You have to be disciplined if you want to get fit,and avoid fatty food. A balanced diet is the key.

Martin Villaflor, 21

Gymnast
Course: Elementary Education

Describe a regular day. Our training is MWF, 6-9 a.m. and we do a lot of stuff in our training. We jog and do bar exercises, being a goalkeeper, my coach puts me into international drills where I would have to stop the ball from different angles.

What does your diet consist of? On breakfast, I eat a lot of rice with meat or tuna. For dinner, I just take more fruit and light food. But on this varies depending on the season. If it's off-season, I could practically eat anything, but come December, which is a month before the UAAP starts, I go back to my regular diet. Taking supplements is also important.

What are your no-no's when it comes to food? Dessert! Chocolate, maybe once a month and definitely no carbohydrate.

What benefits can one get if he/she gets into your sport? Whole body development. You learn how to dive for the ball which demands quickness, your quadriceps and legs will be developed, and your upper body will be strengthened since you will get hit with the ball more often. (If you were to become a goalkeeper).

Do you have any mantra or philosophy that you live by as an athlete? Dive for the ball. Fight now and die later.

Regular or diet soda? I don't drink soda.

Sinful craving? Sisig, Inihaw and Lechon!

Advice for people who want to get fit: Eat more fruits and vegetables and try to jog every other day to keep those love handles away.

Tours, Leisure & Chow

A taste of autumn at Century Tsukiji

RESIDENCE PLAZA are memories with family and friends. Discover Japan's most beautiful season and bask in its finest taste and flavors.

Autumn is predominantly considered as the best time of the year for many Japanese where the town is tinted with relaxing hues of red, orange, and yellow. The glorious autumn colors also give a renewed feeling of freshness. Brought about by light breezes and cool temperatures. This period is also marked as the most wonderful time to enjoy seasonal delicious staples, where most vegetables, meat, and seafood are in its excellent quality.

Matsutake or wild mushroom is a delicious tasty type that only grows during autumn in Japan. (Buyers could relish matsutake in two different ways: yakimatsutake P1,3000 or grilled matsutake P1,800) which is a close tasty soup in a clay pot. Another exquisite autumn food is the Kamameshi (P600) which is a close tasty soup in a clay pot. Another exquisite autumn food is the Kamameshi (P600). The menu comes in entrée to eight suits (P750 to P1,500) and sashimi is usually a signature seasonal dish that represents autumn.

Other autumn wonders that you needs to be discovered are kakiokoshi or dishes also topped with sea urchin, salmon roe, and sliced salmon for P650, sanshoku aemaki sushi with spicy tuna, shiso and dragon rolls for P650, tuna sweet kind an octopus or deep-fried stew crab for P250, and kamogaki shirayaki or grilled oyster with mayonnaise and cheese, plus many more! Experience these wonderful seasonal treats that you shouldn't miss with prices between P600 to P1,500.

For inquiries or reservations, please contact Century Tsukiji at 528-5655 or restaurant reservation 526.9867.

FROM left, chef Calvin Klose, Chef Francisco, Jocelyn Krueger, Karen Enriquez and AVP Dexie Cruz.

Buffet fiesta at The Legend Villas

CITY LIFE IS INTOXICATING. YOU FACE each day with things rushing in your priority list and yet, hardly have time to slow down and just find a moment of complete relaxation. The Legend Villas doors are welcoming you to experience a memorable total celebration of the simple wonders in life - food with a wide range of choices.

The innovative line up of Filipino cuisine is made even more appetizing with the inclusion of international selections available for morning and noon meals. Start your day with the periodic taste of breakfast where the classic lineup is categorized as legendary for buffet lunch, be prepared with innovative goodness. Kinglong ala Lang is combined with the spicy ingredients and coconut cream to capture the inventive delight. Another in the lineup is Pesto di Lolo Mario, a traditional pasaii dish inspired by the late great nonnas. More of these are prepared every Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at P450. But more than that, every drinks are made available in buffet fashion. Fill yourself with the refreshing taste of latest entertainment, iced tea and sago's galaxies for an additional P50.

And when you feel like having buffet any time with your family and friends have the Buffet Celebration Package for P18,000 prepared according to your choice of lineup.

Lolo Mario Restaurant is situated at The Legend Villas, 60 Homer corner Madison Streets, Mandaluyong City. Call 633-1561 to 70 or log on to www.legendvillas.com.ph for more information.

October blast at the Malayan Plaza Hotel

BLAST OFF TO MORE EXCITING NIGHTS AT the Malayan Plaza Hotel as it rounds to One-Bedroom Deluxe package rate of P3,200 net until Oct. 31. This package, which includes overnight accommodation, daily buffet breakfast, complimentary bottled water and daily local newspaper, has become quite a hit with groups of friends and families. More so because guests availing of this deal also have free access of gym facilities, as well as access to the swimming pool.

Managed by Quantum Hotels and Resorts, the Malayan Plaza Hotel, located along ADB Avenue cor Opal Road in Ortigas Center, Pasig City, offers furnished studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units that easily combine aesthetic values, comfort and functionality, apart from featuring stylish interiors. The Malayan Plaza Hotel units are also equipped with complete living, dining and kitchen facilities. Other attractions include: cable network television, HBO/HD telephones, individually controlled air-conditioning, hot and cold water, swimming pool, spas-or whirl pool, children's playroom, private dining, and 24-hour security.

The existing October offer is open to all local residents and foreigners with ACR. Price is inclusive of 10 percent service charge and 10% applicable government taxes.

For further inquiries on this and other hot deals, reservations and bookings, contact The Malayan Plaza Hotel at tel. nos. (632)596-0055/634-6134, fax (632)635-2989, online reservations: sales@quantumsuites.com.web site: www.themalayanplazahotel.com.

Lespa at Sofitel launched in grand style

ZEN CANDLES, SCENTED FRANGIPANI oil and hostesses in ochroid t-shirts lined up the way to the grand launch of Lespa at Sofitel at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza's Banaue Pavilion amidst the dramatic skyline of Manila Bay.

Delighted to have a luxury spa open 24/7 within easy access, guests eagerly watched and inquired about the sumptuous exhibiting Lespa signature massages such as Hypnotic Quintessence, an hour of full body massage using Monk Hospitality to reinforce body, mind and spirit; Shamakesh Forever, a gentle green tea exfoliation followed by a light and gentle massage using wide sweeping kind movements; and Brazil Colours, a detoxifying and re-energizing massage combining hand techniques and Brazilian bamboo sticks for lymphatic drainage.

LeSpa at Sofitel is open 24 hours and is located at the Harbor Garden west, lower lobby of the Sofitel Philippine Plaza, CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City. For inquiries and reservations, call ext. no. 551 9555 or log in www.sofitel.com/asia.

Advertisement

You may not like it, but stunts like this keep the fire alive. The Atenistans need the La Sallians, and vice-versa

Stoking the fire

By Adrian Dy

THE STUDENTS' EXPLANATION for why mud was everywhere during the Ateneo celebratory bonfire? "God really is an Ateneo. There was no green grass in sight."

Although the overriding perception was that the bonfire was primarily in honor of the Blue Eagles Basketball team, Ateneo had, in the past few weeks, been blessed with an abundance of athletic victories.

Aside from the UAAP seniors division, the Blue Eagles had also scored wins at the NIP level and the UAAP juniors division. And it was not only in hoops that the Eagles excelled. In the water, the Lady Eagle swimmers and the gentle school Blue Eagle swimmers also added stanchion to their belt. As school mascot Fr. Bel Soriano S.J. said in his homily at the Mass before the bonfire, "What a week, and what a weekend!"

And so there was the Ateneo community, braving a field that had disturbed into a sinkhole. From college students to high school boys to alumni reliving the days of yore, young and old alike were there to celebrate the guts and determination of the athletes who bore their school's colors triumphantly.

'Wickedness'

Then pictures of the firewood began circulating on the Internet and thus was, as the saying goes, relocated to the fire.

Some of the planks of the second used in the bonfire had the names of Ateneo's "Most" opponents of Ateneo's debauched basketball fans written in green paint. Among the names were those of Xtro Manchester, James Maraphas and JR Canis, players on the Great Archers team that Ateneo dispatched in the finals.

Also visible was the name of the La Salle coach Franz Pumaren, planks with "UST Traveling Tigers" and "UP Fighting Maroons," and "Ilone Blind Mice," a shout out to the referees.

La Sallians have pounced on these pictures, reposting them on their blogs and prominent La Salle forums such as Archer-Pride.com. As expected, the comments span a wide spectrum, ranging from "I don't even want to belong to a group of people who celebrates by promoting wickedness" to "it looo[k]s so great, ten pairing names of people on the wood seems to me as if they are packing a carer on someone. In my opinion, it is emotional and immoral, particularly for a Catholic community."

It is not known whose idea this was, whether it was the organizers of the bonfire, alumni, or current students. School president Fr. Nebres is said to have issued a statement saying that the school is looking into the matters in response to complaints from La Salle alumni.

Mixed reactions

In the same way, Ateneo's reaction has been mixed as well. Some have gone out and apologized on their blogs, while others have shrugged it off, saying, "I just think that the whole issue is being blown out of proportion. I don't think anyone means this name-burning to be a personal thing... I'm not saying it isn't bad taste... yes, it is a bit, so, crude—but a lot of people (kerrying) is a pathetic and clueless (a just wow reaction."

Whether or not one thinks the matter is worthy of discussion depends largely on one's sense of humor. One could be thankful that there were only planks of wood and not paper-mâché puppets, which would not have only been rude, but bizarre. On the other hand, there is a sort of macabre humor in it. Like how some people find political jokes hilarious.

Fascinating rivalry

And yet, we must still keep in mind that this act is in no way endorsed of a genuine community, a mindset we should all keep when we chose on a cookie matter "Bang bang" hand gestures at a player value had been shot, or a cell. Lest who forget to use a needle finger, when no video videoing technology has been able to provide collaborative proof.

The controversial Ateneo bonfire logo

The Ateneo-La Salle rivalry is a wonderful thing, not only for students and alumni of the school, but for casual fans as well. It is fascinating, with its deep-seated traditions and rants. And let's face it, burning wood is a far cry from the old days when our ancestors were attacked in and then pursued after games.

Ateneo celebrated their championship win last Sept. 26, pandora the gun, by burning another big (can the fire is being this rivalry) blazing. You may not like it, or you may not endorse it, we must like this and refusing to go out in chains second place long the fire idea.

In these situations, the Ateneo need the La Sallians, and vice-versa.

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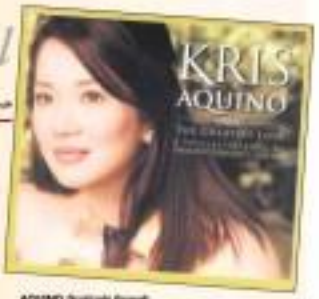
SATURDAY Special

Editor: Nestor U. Torre • Assistant Editor: Rito P. Asilo

COMFY. she private person.

Kris Aquino pays touching musical tribute to her mom



AQUINO: Gratitude through songs and prayers.

By Rito P. Asilo

LIKE HER OF IDOLIZE HER, KRIS AQUINO has always been extraordinary. But, there's good reason why "The Greatest Love," her latest "album," especially deserves to be heard. So, the 37-year-old person-TV host doesn't stop in it. Instead, she gathers a playlist of beautiful songs and heartfelt prayers to pay tribute to her mom, former President Corazon C. Aquino, who's been diagnosed with colon cancer.

In the album, Kris paints an intimate portrait of her mother as a private person. This time around, her famed caution doesn't dispense self-indulgent ramblings about how she figures in the bigger scheme of things, but instead offers heart-warming nuggets of revelatory information about her illustrious family and how they're coping during this difficult time.

Inspirational duet

In the album, Sydney Regine Winnpenny and Lani Misalucha render their sounding cover of the inspirational Whitney Houston-Mariah Carey duet, "When You Believe," Kris tells her mother: "Dear Mom, I hope and pray that when you're reading this, you're okay. We didn't want to add to your burden by showing you how we're up we all were when we found out about your cancer.

"When Viel told me (about it), I felt the world crashing down, and all the weight was centered on my heart and stomach. I cried uncontrollably. I drove up to church, running to purge myself of the worst possible tears. Melodee (Lopez) was crying back, and I wanted to share them with you, just so you'd know how much (sing your baby) has meant to me."

As Kris looks back, she roots her reminiscin with 13 well-chosen tracks, performed by some of the music industry's most beautiful voices, among them Martin Nievera ("The Greatest Love of All"), Gary Valenciano ("Isn't She Lovely?"), Ogie Alcasid ("Ngiti ng Dayan") and Pinky Bernal, who sings Andrew Lloyd Webber and Jim Steinman's "Tot Meat Who."

Also notable are Billy Crawford's reworked version of James Taylor's "How Sweet It Is," Jay-R's soothing "A Song for Mama," Mon Foundolo' "Bless the Hand and the Children," and Bernie Liang's inspired remake of Carol Baconnet's hit ballad, "Forgotten Ko."

Vivid recollections

Understandably these beautiful songs take the back seat when Kris begins sharing her touchingly vivid recollections: When she was in a declamation contest in second grade, how Cory gathered Kris and her siblings to pray the Rosary after getting a call from a foreign news agency and learning about Ninoy's assassination; Cory and Kris' brother, Noynoy, literally dragging her after a bomb exploded outside her bedroom window in Arlington, etc.

But, the most touching part of Kris' "open letter" is an earnest apologia: "When the doctors (during colonoscopy) asked when (was) her operation was, you told them it was while giving birth to me—in Cebu. In one section—when your blood pressure went so zero and you hemorrhaged because of placenta previa. That was just a preview of the stress, suffering and heartaches that were to come, even to me.

"I'm sorry, Mom, for all the times I wasn't the daughter you deserved. The last thing I ever heard said about me during my last birthday was that I was a loving daughter. I know I am, because loving you so is more makes my job easy. I may have mumbled, bumbled and grumbled—and yet, you never stopped believing that (I'd eventually find) my way."

KRIS with her iconic parents.

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Fast-paced thriller ups the action ante

By Noelani Torre

THE ACTION/THRILLER, "Eagle Eye," moves at such a brisk pace that it's not until the end credits roll is that you begin to realize that the movie, in fact, is nothing particularly brilliant or original about it. While it's not likely to end up on any critic's top 10 list this year, however, the film is full of energy and suspense that you'll need to just go along for the ride and enjoy it.

LABEOUF AND MONAGHAN. On the run from the hazards of technology

Directed by D.J. Caruso ("Disturbia") and starring Shia LaBeouf, Michelle Monaghan, Billy Bob Thornton, Rosario Dawson, and Michael Chiklis, the movie deals with the dangers of today's world: paranoia, surveillance, excessive amount of information is available to a certain each or online.

Dropout

LaBeouf plays Jerry Shaw, an underachieving Stanford dropout working at a copy shop. His life changes when his estranged, militant-hotshot twin brother dies. Cases of years, arrests and unconscious interest get mysteriously delivered to his apartment, and a female disembodied voice (Julianne Moore) calls him up on his cell phone and tells him that she'll be coming to arrest him... until he buries shockability to protect.

He doesn't, so they arrest him... but the voice gets him out again before the agent-in-charge (Thornton) and his military counterpart (Dawson) turn the way thing about it. A chase ensues, and Jerry finds himself "booking" up with Rachel (Michelle Monaghan), a single mom who also has to do what the voice says...or else, her son will die!

Omniscient voice

The shadow that runs spies to stay ahead of the authorities, since the voice is apparently omniscient and all-powerful, and controls everything from camera, trains and power lines to traffic lights, cell phones and electronic transactions.

"Eagle Eye" is not the first movie to explore the possible dangers that a surveillance society and unlimited government access to personal information can bring. Nor is it the first one to tackle the hazards of technology ("2001: a Space Odyssey," anyone?). It's far from being the best of its kind, either, but it's the only one that has a movie-traveling an unmanned military jet chasing an SUV inside a tunnel!

LaBeouf and Monaghan spend most of their screen time fleeing, getting shot at, and looking as if they still can't believe what's happening. Of course, the screenwriters still manage to get them to emote to each other, but the

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THREE KINGDOM 12:15 | 2:30 4:45 | 9:45 | 9:15

DIGITAL PROJECTION HELLBOY 2 2:30

EAGLE EYE 3:00 | 5:30 | 8:00 | 10:30

DIGITAL PROJECTION EAGLE EYE 12:15 | 5:00 7:30 | 9:30

ASLAN 12:15 | 2:30 4:00 | 7:15 | 9:30

MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL 2:00 | 4:30 7:00 | 9:30

MADE IT HAPPEN 12:30 | 2:45 5:00 | 7:15 | 9:30

INSTANT CHRISTMAS 12:15 | 2:30 4:30 | 7:30 | 9:30

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'Igor' is a big-screen charmer

From page E4

and Governor Rodolfo Antolin. Call 926-4002.

'Weird Creatures'

Animal Planet presents the second season of "Nick Baker's Weird Creatures," every Thursday at 10 p.m. The series showcases the planet's strangest creatures. On Oct. 9 reforms focuses on the food Gremlin, one of the rarest pet status in the world.

The Day

From Oct. 4 to 8, the bilingual Latino trio, The Day, go on a pinoy tour of Manila to plug their album, "The Day The Cops." Tonight at 8 p.m., they perform at Alchemy.

Best of 'Storyline'

To launch its second season, ANC's "Storyline" screens its first on episodes at Robinsons Galleria at 8:30 p.m. on Oct. 6. The week- by documentary highlights the strengths of the human spirit as it features those true stories per telecast. Its second season starts on Friday, Oct. 10 at 6 p.m.

NYC acting workshop

The New Voice Company's weekend acting workshops, under NYC associate artistic director, Ron Avila, begins on Saturday, Oct. 11 from 1 to 2 p.m., and ends on Oct. 6. Call 995-2497.

Gold record awards

Gold record awards run in the Cinemalyn family, with Dad Cubby and daughter KC both selling at least 12,500 copies of their respective albums, thus their "earning gold." KC will promote her CD at 4 p.m. today at Odyssey SM Megamall and tomorrow at 2 p.m. at Odyssey SM Bacoor, and 5 p.m. at Ayala Festival Mall.

'Beyond Performance'

Ongoing until Oct. 11 at the Big & Small Gallery SM Megamall, is "Beyond Performance," an exhibit showcasing multimedia by performance artists Eglan Rotan, Conny Sjoen and Lito Schoeller.

Dolsang Laboratorya play

Catch Roland Dionisio's one-woman ferocious play, "M Utopiang Jan Doubleindahon Belsayon," starring Zach Valenzuela, Alaetha Cortes and Mon Jacolbia on Dec. 6, 8 p.m. at Teatro Tanghalang Pilipino, Bayanihan Center, UP Diliman. Call Teatro 0915-506-2213.

Cirio . . .

From page E4

to the project, but on hindsight, we relate it, because it enabled us to interact even more closely with Cirio before he passed away.

Looking back on Cirio's life and career and how they impacted on us, we salute him as a filmmaker who loved the movies, film industry workers, and the viewing public with enormous passion and bravery. And, as a friend, he was generous, considerate and fun to be with.

They don't make them better than that.

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1	1 MIRRORS	2 EAGLE EYE	3 MAKE IT HAPPEN	4 KULAM
GLORIETTA 4	1 MAKE IT HAPPEN	2 KULAM	3 EAGLE EYE	
	4 THE HOUSEMAID	5 THREE KINGDOMS	6 MIRRORS	7 MUTANT CHRONICLES
GREENBELT 1	1 KULAM	2 EAGLE EYE		
GREENBELT 3	1	2 EAGLE EYE		
	3 MUTANT CHRONICLES	4 MAKE IT HAPPEN	5 MIRRORS	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 EAGLE EYE	2 MIRRORS		
	3 MAKE IT HAPPEN	4 KULAM	5 MUTANT CHRONICLES	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 EAGLE EYE	2 MIRRORS	3 HELLBOY 2	4 KULAM
MARKET! MARKET!	1 KULAM	2 MAKE IT HAPPEN		
	3 EAGLE EYE	4 MIRRORS	5 MUTANT CHRONICLES	
TRINOMA	1 KULAM	2 THREE KINGDOMS	3 MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL	4 MIRRORS
	5 MAKE IT HAPPEN	6 MUTANT CHRONICLES	7 EAGLE EYE	

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

- Glorietta — SPI MADNESS — September 22-October 13, Glorietta Activity Center
- Greenbelt — SHOPPING SPREE AT GREENBELT 1 — August 15-October 15
- Alabang Town Center — COOL SEXY JAZZ — Mini-SPM Soul Child Julianne — October 3, 6:00pm, Center de las Palmas
- Ayala Center Cebu — PUNKMAN: LIVE AT AYALA CENTER CEBU — October 5, 8PM, Activity Center
- Market! Market! — AUTOMATIC CENTER APPLIANCE FAIR — October 1 - 19, Activity Center
- Christian's — Opening Philippines presents Disney's MULAN JR. — August 8 to December 14, 2008
- Ayala Museum — I AM MANY — Ongoing until 21 November 2008 at Second Floor
- Trinoma — CHRIS ALCARAZ LIVE! — October 3, 7:00pm, 4th Level Trillanes Park
- ANSON'S APPLIANCE MADNESS — September 29 - Oct. 16, Activity Center

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NOW SHOWING

Santos, Sutherland share fascination for the occult in supernatural thrillers

By Rito P. Asilo

THIS WEEK, DECIDING WILL BE farthest from the minds of Judy Ann Santos, Iwrnak Trillo and Kiefer Sutherland's fans. In Jun Lana's "Ang mga Kaluluwa ni Aurora" and Alexander Aja's "Mirrors," fright and company are giving horror-loving moviegoers something to scream and squirm about.

In "Mirrors," Aja's Hollywood adaptation of Sung-ho Kim's 2003 Korean thriller, "Into the Mirror," Sutherland plays former NYPD detective Ben Carson, a recovering alcoholic who's on the verge of losing his family—and sanity—after a horrible encounter results in the final shooting of a colleague. The beleaguered ex-cop soon realizes that there's more to his troubles than post-traumatic stress and a shaky marriage.

SANTOS AND TRILLO. Play wife and husband in "Magnifico Ko Si...Robin."

SUTHERLAND. Thespian-boxer.

Night watchman

Racing to get on with his life, Ben takes a job as a night watchman at an old luxury department store that recently burned down. But, the building's charred remains aren't the only things that keep him company in the wee hours of the night.

After receiving a strange package from the murdered night watchman he replaced, he learns that, more than five decades earlier, the department store used to be a psychiatric facility that employed unorthodox experimental methods to treat schizophrenia—and the site of a massacre that left scores dead.

Aja doesn't have much originality in his directorial bones, but the 30-year-old Cannes-nominated filmmaker (2003's "High Tension") knows how to put his tortured flair to good use. While the Korean original is more cohesive, Aja's slick and lowbrow visual style nevertheless gives the Hollywood version a grittier and edgier coating.

However, it's perhaps done away with "Into the Mirror's" intriguing backstory about twins—which is a shame.

Giving the film its thespic boost is Kiefer Sutherland, whose vulnerability makes the film more accessible to viewers.

But, like the Pang brothers' recent remake of "Bangkok Dangerous," the movie further proves that Hollywood seldom gets its remakes of Asian cinematic crowd-pleasers right. A notable exception is Andrew Lau and Alan Mak's "Infernal Affairs."

Turns and the result are also as dour as Jun Lana's "Ang Kiri ng Si...Kulas," which appears to heavily borrow its premise from last year's "Mano," featuring Hasmibahasan and Subgenre Vinegroove's Thai thriller about conjoined twins.

Judy Ann Santos, who is physiognomist here to her frontlist, plays Mira, the self-absorbed wife of Paul (Dennis Trillo). She suffers from post-traumatic amnesia after a vehicular accident.

Secrets

As she slowly recovers from memory lapses, snippets of information begin to reveal secrets from her dark past: A tortured lover, an angry witchcraft-practicing mother, an abandoned ancestral halo. Masks (all to be played by Santos), and a demonic legacy? Can Mira alter the course of destiny and emerge unscathed by the forces of evil?

Lana knows how to tell a cohesive story, but the first half of the production is hobbled by too many strained narrative rounds that only chance an otherwise serviceable supernatural thrill. A cloud of creeping an atmosphere of creeping danger or lingering doom (which is what makes Chito Rono's horror flicks very effective), "Kulas" delivers its scare cavities in quick, unpretentious jolts, so you'll see its characters get inexplicably attacked from nightmares are terrified by repetitive visions of a cadaverous presence. Alas, the search is not a good thing.

Cirio Santiago takes his final bow

By Nestor U. Torre

WE JOIN MEMbers of the movie industry in mourning the death of noted director-producer Cirio Santiago. Through the years, we have been fortunate to know both Cirio and his sister, Digna, as colleagues and friends. Scions of Peruvian, one of the Big Four movie production companies in the '50s, Cirio and Digna have been industry leaders of no mean accomplishment and influence.

SANTIAGO. Making love for Filipino films and the movie industry's workers.

Appreciation

It's instructive to note that though the decades, quite a number of Philippine presidents tapped Cirio to head major film industry bodies, a clear sign of their appreciation of his leadership and his abiding love for Filipino films and the movie industry's workers.

In addition, Cirio earned his own niche in the movies, because he was one of only a few Filipino filmmakers who obtained reproduction features that were released worldwide. He was an busy making 120-thousand films that he earned an American stage-worth distinction, and, he was one of only four Filipino directors in the 13 Film Directors Guild's list of active members.

Through the years, Cirio tapped me to work with him in various capacities, and we became good friends. When he was appointed as head of the Film Development Foundation along with Marichu VP Maramis, we worked even harder together as we judged the foundation's various competitions and taught to annual screenwriting workshops, which produced many fine writers.

He worked even more closely when, as the film foundation's head, Cirio invited me to cover the Los Angeles Film Market. We were allowed more than one share of film festivals, but the LA Film Market experience was different, because it taught us many valuable lessons about the business side of film production.

Best mentor

Cirio was the best mentor in this regard, because he had been selling his TV and film productions abroad for many years. He allowed us to join him as he talked movie business with producers and distributors from all over the world, and we saw how important international connections were in finding up TV movie deals for our productions.

Best of all, Cirio and his loving wife Annabelle invited us to stay with them in their Redondo Beach home, and enabled us to touch base with veteran filipino stars living in Los Angeles and its environs. The personal touch capped weeks of hectic activity, and we greatly appreciated it.

Back in Manila, Cirio would sometimes ask us to recommend new TV film writers for his projects, and we arranged meetings between him and them. Thus did we see for ourselves how welcoming Cirio was of new talents, and his stock with us rose even higher.

Most recently, more last year, we were meeting on a regular basis with Cirio on what he envisioned would be his "legacy" to Filipino viewers, a big saga inspired which he wanted us to write and direct.

The project was so huge that we wanted to begin off, but Cirio had become such a good friend that we simply had to agree to do anything he wanted. His sickness passing has effectively put an end

CIRIO, B3

Fast-paced thriller

From page B7

production is hardly as concerned with finding out its characters as it is with making things collide. Thrown in the sarcastic spirit, Poonia Mangat, has a character that, while encouraged, is at least one blood, but gave Dimitri Isn't given much to do as his lover/investigator, Eve.

"Night Eye" could have been a great film—its premise is certainly interesting and relevant enough—but it focuses too much on getting the effect right and not the story, as it seems to shot at premium. Executively produced by Steven Spielberg, whose idea it all apparently was, its production values are top-notch, which explains why its many stunts and action sequences are enjoyable to watch.

'Igor' is a big-screen charmer

ANIMATED WEEKENDS: ANIMATION Tony Leondis ("The Prince of Egypt") and producer Max Howard ("The Little Mermaid") have come up with their latest big-screen theatrical, "Igor."

The irreverent comedy brings a new twist to the classic monster genre with its take on Frankenstein's bumbleheaded lab assistant who dreams of becoming an evil scientist in his own right and winning first place at the annual Evil Science Fair. The film's principal characters are voiced by John Cusack, Steve Buscemi, John Cleese and Christian Slater.

Opening on Oct. 8, "Igor" finds a number of wacky sidekicks, like Brain, literally a brain in a jar who's a little light on intelligence, and Scamper, a cynical bunny brought back from being used for lab. Despite its "evil" set of monstrous characters, "Igor" is really a story of hope, and shows how the most unlikely creatures can change the world.

"IGOR." Brings new twist to classic monster genre.

'Oprah' on Hallmark

Tomorrow at 9 p.m., Oprah's favorite things for summer, Oct. 11, "The Big Give" challenges its four remaining contestants with "Queen from the Dresser." Oct. 18, the charity-themed episode, "The Big Family Reunion." Oct. 19, the last of "America's Funniest Home Videos," plus Tim Hay and Sean Powers. Oct. 20, "The Big Give's" finale requires the three remaining finalists to give big to Oprah with no used money, and in only 48 hours!

CHARIOT. Tapilio the Hallmark drama, "Hello Sister, Goodbye Life."

TV-film viewing treats

Still on Hallmark, watch out today at 9 p.m. for "Human Trafficking," an uncompromising drama starring Mira Sorvino and Donald Sutherland. Oct. 11, in "Hello Sister, Goodbye Life," Ellen Martin (Jacy Chabert) is suddenly replaced with caring for a young half-sister she barely knows.

Oct. 18, in "The One," current Michael Blake meets the wedding of a young woman he's longtime-ly fallen in love with. Trouble is, she's marrying somebody else! Oct. 19 "Have My Heart" is the story of a random-day flowers and Juliet whose feuding Italian families now competing pizza restaurants.

New TV shows: Every Saturday and Sunday at 3 p.m. beginning today, "The Spies," starring Gen. 10 at 9 p.m., "Mchenry Murders II." Beginning Oct. 20 at 9 p.m., "Our Martin II."

Voice of a Star

On Oct. 20 at Stagehill Edsa, the Voice of a Star singing fit holds its grand finals. Competing are Shane Anja Tarun, Bathtime Camelo, Joel dela Cruz, Elanor Bolonios, Primadonna Wilkinson, Glenlyn Ramirez, Rosalyn Bulosa, Carla Isabel Torrevillas.

MORE B3

SATURDAY Special

HOOBE. Abbreviation of poverty.

Star power meets philanthropy in celeb charities

STEWART. Soft spot for animals.

DICAPRIO. Bono for a greener world.

FERGIE. Awareness for HIV prevention.

NEW YORK—Bono battles the AIDS epidemic, Leonardo DiCaprio vows to make the world a greener place, and Martha Stewart has a soft spot for animals. For today's celebs, charity work is almost as much a part of the job as walking the red carpet. Famous names have become affiliated with preventing domestic violence, curing breast cancer, fixing smiles and saving farms from developments.

"You have to care about something other than what's going to bring you money," observed Moxie L. Reid, managing director of Moxie Rowbot, a firm that does brand strategy for public figures. "You have to be charitable. It shows that you care about someone other than yourself. It also shows that you are in touch with the average American's needs and plight."

Tough decision

With no shortage of charities, organizations there are more than 1,000,000, according to GuideStar, and many of them reaching out to celebs for their backing, choosing which causes to support is a tough decision, said actress Julianne Moore. She said she is often approached to add star power to a cause.

Her signature causes are Saheman Sehewah, a rare genetic disease, and fighting poverty in the United States with Save the Children. "For causes, I choose something with a personal interest," shared Moore, who was on a Bush's Beans-coordinated press tour to push a national produce standard. "With 'Fi,' I met a family. They really wanted somebody

BONO. Battles the AIDS epidemic.

and they met me. With Save the Children, I thought someone should be talking about what's going on with poverty in the US."

Many stars choose causes that have personally touched them: The singer, Fergie, 33, had friends die from AIDS, and is now the voice for the MAC AIDS Fund's Global Style Provision Initiative. Proceeds from the sale of her Viva Glam VI lipstick/lip gloss go to the cause. In her new role, she said she hopes to raise awareness for HIV prevention.

"I was taught not to take it lightly" she reckoned, referring to sexual activity. "That was because of my upbringing. I might be seen dancing in sexy videos, but this issue I take very seriously. There's performance, and there's real life."

Commercial side

There's a commercial side to the goodwill, too. Large companies benefit from the celebrity connection, even if they're giving money to charity. The Estee Lauder-owned MAC has had 14 Viva Glam spokespersons, including Fergie, Elton John and Boy George.

Still, it's not all about cash registers. Many charities are choosy about the celebrities they work with. They don't want the star to overshadow the cause, and some celebs use charity work as a launching pad for a career, said Anthony Rhew of Anthony Mora Communications. Plus, with so many celebrities championing causes, it's easy for people to tune out.

Celebrities with firsthand experience tend to be more passionate and knowledgeable about an issue. When the Calabasas Girl Scouts chose actress-singer Hilary Duff to be their honorary ambassador, she turned to Kyle MacLachlan, whose mother died of the disease. (Halle Berry is also involved in the Gallaway campaign.)

Emily Callahan, managing director of marketing communications for the organization, added: "We believe in working with people who have been directly impacted by our mission, and people who help us meet our audience are very sought to reach on our own."

Gap community

As an example, the group worked with Cynthia Rowe, who's a breast cancer survivor. She can reach younger women and the gay community, said Callahan. Spokespersons Gabrielle Union can reach African-American women, who are more likely to die from the disease.

Many celebs seem genuine in their efforts to raise awareness. Mel B of the Spice Girls is helping raise $250,000 for Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. She's also auctioning every item in her UK home on MyWebsite.com, with proceeds benefiting CLIC Sargent, a program for children with cancer. "It makes life more enjoyable for me, knowing that I'm helping women and children by donating my time, energy and support," she shared. "It doesn't get my horror than that!" —AP

Becca, Mom and Charmaine headline LA jazz concert

LOS ANGELES—BIG SHOWS featuring Filipino talents in LA are usually jampacked concerts from Manila. Sarmenpalooza: A Celebration of Music" is a rare Hizzy musical event in LA, because it's an original production.

Featuring Becca Godinez, Aline David, winner of the 2006 London International Jazz Vocal Competition, Charmaine Clamor and other LA-based talents, "Sarmenpalooza" is the first concert of the Filipino American Library (FAL), the first and largest Filipino library in America that actively promotes the history, culture and professional achievements of Filipinos and Filipino Americans through its book collection, leadership development and cultural programs. He supports the noble goals of this nonprofit organization and its library, which is located in LA's historic Filipinotown.

Highlights

FAL is breaking away from its tradition of hosting glamorous dinner events at the famed Biltmore Hotel. Instead, the early library of its kind in the US has decided to hold its annual gala and Spirit Awards in a concert format on Dec. 13 at the Nokia Theatre in LA's Little Tokyo. The gala dinners were star-studded affairs, set your usual tuxedo-and-gown occasions. Memorable highlights included an evening when Marlo Thomas and Lou Diamond Phillips hammed it up in a spoonerisms number.

The concert should be just as fun and exciting, considering the musical talents involved. The irrepressible Alec Mapa, a sassy presence in Adam Sandler's recent smash comedy, "You Don't Mess with the Zohan," and currently seen as "Desperate Housewives" and "Ugly Betty," is sure of the swankiest. He will be receiving IMDb Rube Model Award—his acceptance speech is probably going to be a hoot.

Also, who's also known for his work on Broadway, tirelessly supports organizations like the Human Rights Campaign, AIDS Project Los Angeles and Project Angel Food. Interesting trivia: Did you know that he appeared in R.E.M.'s seminal video for the song, "Losing My Religion," as the boy tied to a tree with an arrow in his heart?

Also performing in "Sarmenpalooza" are jazz pianist Tarang Kamolig. Three of a kind and sax player, Michael Jacob. Ed Reyzo, who is serving as the show's director, said: "Becca, Mom and Charmaine will be doing a 20-minute set each. The house band is composed of Tarang and his band. Accompanying Charmaine on guitarist Richard Erkard and percussionist Gustavo Garcia. Bravo

MAGAZINE

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben T. Anjuako

MAPA. Recipient of FAL's Rule Model Award.

GODINEZ. Performs bossa nova tunes in the benefit show.

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GALLERIA

1 EAGLE EYE
2 MAG-INGAT KA SA KULAM
3 IMOH FILM FESTIVAL
4 MUTANT CHRONICLES
5 ROOM 213
6 MIRRORS
7
8 SUNNASEO
9 MAKE IT HAPPEN
10 THREE KINGDOMS

ERMITA

1 MAKE IT HAPPEN
2 MIRRORS
3 MUTANT CHRONICLES
4 EAGLE EYE
5 MAG-INGAT KA SA KULAM
6 RESERVED
7 RESERVED
8 SUNNASEO
9 THREE KINGDOMS

METRO EAST

1 MAKE IT HAPPEN
2 DISASTER MOVIE: I KULAM
3 MAG-INGAT KA SA KULAM
4 MUTANT CHRONICLES
5 EAGLE EYE
6 THREE KINGDOMS
7 BANGKOK DANGEROUS
8 MIRRORS

NOVALICHES

1 EAGLE EYE
2 MIRRORS
3 THE SISTERHOOD of the TRAVELLING PANTS 2
4 MAG-INGAT KA SA KULAM

PIONEER

1 MAKE IT HAPPEN
2 MUTANT CHRONICLES
3 MAG-INGAT KA SA KULAM
4 MIRRORS

STA. ROSA

1 BANGKOK DANGEROUS
2 MIRRORS
3 I.T.A.L.Y.
4 MAG-INGAT KA SA KULAM

LIPA

1 MAG-INGAT KA SA KULAM
2 BANGKOK DANGEROUS
3 RIGHTEOUS KILL
4 LOST in BEIJING

DASMARIÑAS

1 BIG STAN
2 EAGLE EYE
3 MAG-INGAT KA SA KULAM
4 RIGHTEOUS KILL

IMUS

1 MAG-INGAT KA SA KULAM
2 BIG STAN
3 EAGLE EYE
4 MIRRORS

ANGELES

1 MR'S ISLAND
2 MAG-INGAT KA SA KULAM
3 I.T.A.L.Y.
4 GRAVEDANCERS

STARMILLS

1 GRAVEDANCERS
2 MAG-INGAT KA SA KULAM
3 BANGKOK DANGEROUS
4 I.T.A.L.Y.
5 BABYLON A.D.
6 BIG STAN

BACOLOD

1 RESERVED
2 HELL BOY 2
3 MAG-INGAT KA SA KULAM
4 RIGHTEOUS KILL
5 GRAVEDANCERS
6 BANGKOK DANGEROUS

ILOILO

1 MIRRORS
2 RIGHTEOUS KILL
3 MAG-INGAT KA SA KULAM
4 HELL BOY 2
5 BABYLON A.D.
6 MOV3

THE POPULAR couple's new talent development studio is filling a very real need with its wide range of performing, writing and directing workshops.

Isay and Robert venture into 'the business of show'

By Maxine U. Torre

ROBERT SEÑA AND ISAY ALVAREZ have very busy performing careers, but they've reached a stage in their lives when they're more focused on helping other talents fine-tune it to the biz. Then, they've put up (along with friends Tricia Amper-Alvarez and Carl Balita) the Spotlight Artists' Center on Jupiter st. in Makati (tel. 899-8000 or 0922/898-6644).

The new talent development studio (which coincidentally shares facilities with Isay's dance workshops, and Robert and Isay find fresh rewarded and stimulated. After all, it takes a lot of time and resources to put up and run a studio.

Vast experience

Their particular strength is the fact that they've performers who can use their vast experience in the field to help their young workshoppers make it, as well. Most important of all, they love the performing arts and the entertainment world, and hope this rubs off on their students. That genuine love for performing is key, because it's what separates the true artist from the "technocrat."

ALVAREZ AND SEÑA. Their genuine love for performing is key.

The popular couple's friends have been surprised by the Señas' "unconventional" success story as entrepreneurs, because before Spotlight, Robert and Isay weren't exactly famous for their business acumen. How did they "reinvent" themselves as prime impresarios of "the business of show"?

Isay shares: "Robert and I have been wanting to go into business for sometime now, but we didn't know how to all began when Robert needed a good manager but couldn't latch on to anybody, so I decided to learn the ropes, and ended up managing our bookings and schedules for shows, TV appearances and corporate events.

"We direct most of our shows and have lately ventured into producing them, as well. Our album, 'Duets,' we both conceptualized and produced, and it taught us more business lessons. Encouraged, we also came up with our "Divaspot" album, featuring other artists like Rivals Iglesias, Lalay Vergara, Jessica Sweidzoro and Carl Balita. It's a concept album with a topic: great divas.

"We also went into retail with our Orange step and drop convenience store on Malibay Uptown st. in Quezon City. It's simple in concept, basic items known—proving elementary level to our business 'resolve.'

"When we put up the Spotlight Artists' Center, pairing high-school level services with Tricia and Carl has been really good, and are now into programs for musical theater and our youngest writing, acting and directing workshops, not to mention all sorts of leisure in salsa, percussion, piano, cello, violin and other musical instruments.

Progress

"And we'll soon start our Spotlight Kids comic and movement program for toddlers 4to5, worth out for the opening of our local rehearsal room. All of these new developments take up your room of our time, but we're happy to do it, because our students' progress is encouraging and exciting.

"On top of everything, I'm playing the title role in the new "Lolo" musical at Resorts World in Newsabay, so this also takes up a lot of my time. But, I'm giving it everything I've got, because it's a privilege to play Cory Aquino, who's loved by so many Filipinos.

Big offer

"Now, if Spotlight is our high school level in business, our "college degree" is already beckoning to us, by way of a big offer that we're still considering and praying about.

"It's a lot of hard work! But, one thing is certain—we're enjoying it. I never thought we'd get into business and work by here it, but it makes sense that we can't be lax and complacent. We all need to look for it and find it, and work hard to order to enjoy God's blessings.

"My final piece of advice: Don't stop you smile, you don't know what you're missing while you're to slumber! Smile. Giggle!"

Eradicating corruption

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Biswas

THE ROOT OF CORRUPTION grows from the heart of a dissatisfied person. Such an individual doesn't find happiness from what he has and wants more and more. He is hungry spiritually, so he gets his temporary pleasures from the world.

Problem

Changing political systems don't eradicate the need of corruption. It's a deep problem that can only be purged by a stronger and more superior than political power. Then shall we stand, shall not fall. Then shall we commit sexuality. Then shall we subject other people to misery. If you enjoy a certain position, don't use it to exploit others.

The love of money is always at work. So, criminals and crooks, lawyers, doctors and priests turn poison into wealth that no one can steal. They have peace, happiness and joy!

Screen incarnation of video game imagines a grim, war-torn future

By Noelani Torre

WHEN YOU TURN A BOLD-playing game (RPG) into a movie, the one thing you should never do is take it too seriously. Fun and a little cheesiness work, philosophical discussions and an attempt at reaching an epic scope do not.

Unfortunately, for fans of the game, the film adaptation of "The Mutant Chronicles" doesn't have enough of the former and has too much of the latter. It makes for a mind-numbing viewing experience—not exactly what you'd want your action movie to be.

However, this doesn't mean you can't derive any enjoyment from it. Some scenes—particularly those involving the titular mutants—clashing in the arena...aren't (in a very grisly, brutal kind of way).

JAME. Fights like this are in store for the film.

Sequence

Then, there's the sequence where the movie's protagonists plummet to the earth in a metal container of some, their parachutes torn to shreds—and the last thing you'd want is to get over your sense of outrage. Movie tickets are expensive these days, after all), you'll realize that the movie is good for a couple of laughs. That the filmmakers didn't intend for it to be funny only makes it even more hilarious.

Directed by Simon Hunter, the movie stars Thomas Jane, Ron Perlman, Devon Aoki, Anna Walton, Benno Fürmann, Sean Pertwee, Lee Ingleby and John Malkovich. The story is set 300 years into the future, where the wars over world is a grim, cheerless place.

Four superpowers—Brotherhood, Capitol, Imperial and Mishima—rule conceivably in one of their many dominions, an ancient soul gets blown up, uncovering an otherworldly machine that spawns mutants. Apparently, their goal is to make all human mutants, and the objective of the game...or rather, the objective of the movie's band of heroes—is to save mankind by blowing up the machine.

But Perlman is Brother Samuel, the head of a secret order whose reason for being is to provide information about the alien/mutant machine, which has apparently been captivating humans on and off for generations. With his ancient book, the Chronicles, he and his motley crew of customarily types set off to save the world. More or less, you can guess how the rest of the story unfolds. In movies like this, players...or characters—are killed one by one, until there's only one person left standing to get the job done!

Visuals

The movie's visuals are a mashup of low-budget remixes of "Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow." The costumes are noisy enough in the beginning, but they quickly become just another outside type. The passport hopped down every 30 minutes or so, and there are moments when you'll have to seriously concentrate or you'll miss out. What all these famous and cantankerous actors are doing here is anyone's guess. Someone should've told John Malkovich to stay away from fantasy flicks.

"Mutant Chronicles," the game, is what's known as a pen-and-paper or table-top RPG. It was published in 1995 by Target Games AB (now Paradox Entertainment) and has since generated a number of spinoffs, including computer video-game versions and comic books. The movie is its latest incarnation.

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MIRRORS - R13 7:00, 10:00

EAGLE EYE - PG13 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50

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SHANG CINEPLEX

1 EAGLE EYE PG-13 1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40

2 MIRRORS R-13 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30

3 MY BESTFRIEND'S GIRL R-13 2:15, 4:40, 7:05, 9:30

4 3 KINGDOMS R-13 12:20, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40

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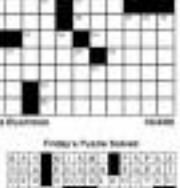
Chicago, IL

Friday's Puzzle Solved



ACROSS

1 ___ Ex (destroyer, briefly)
5 Alberto Korda's art is literally
10 Go-between
14 Another of Jerry Garcia's bands
15 Cuban's concern
16 Ancient manuscript
20 Thailand-to-India dish
21 Salvador Dalí's companion
23 Criminal cad
24 Take off the top
25 Hitches
26 Gets automated
27 Dane
28 Crystal Phillips of Survivor
29 Kindled
31 Gallery curator
32 Carolina rival
33 Ancient
34 Voice of Tweety's nemesis
36 Hitched
42 Starting rotation
43 I, in Köln
44 Peach, persimmon
46 Lynched
48 Ancient Egyptian supervisor
49 Clothes
50 Masterpiece
55 Obama's "Will Call" on stage
56 Improve
57 Highly respected scholar
58 Ignite
59 Tell a known lie
60 Cut a dress too short in spots
62 Logical property
63 Happening, quickly and humorously
64 Like some O'Neills
65 Queen Bean's aunt

DOWN

1 Hide-and-___
2 Like up-and-coming people
3 Kids' author Blume
4 Casanova pitches
5 Geologist's
6 Publisher's tedious
7 Peter in Oz
8 Silly business?
9 Fall implement
10 Subject of "The Shape Lord"
11 Equine footballs
12 Those who shout
13 Mature by current year
14 Formula event
19 Columbo's cartoon mom
22 Pen used
26 Probably, to Pliny
28 Ride a wave's length
29 Big fish
30 Amarillo individual
35 Pitch a shutout
36 Track officials
37 Latino boy name
38 Steeplechase
40 Always on the move
41 Hollywood Outdoor
48 Los Angeles Housewife
49 Detroit suds
51 Phone for Dolly
52 Type of wine
54 Bird-feeder device
61 Desk adornment
62 Member of "LA Banda"
67 Green lentils

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

FOR BORN TODAY You have a sense of humor. You attract others more than they attract you. Your favorite author is Dave Barry. Although you like variety, you're not fickle. You're committed, personally, professionally, to whatever. You pass the one yes to the steps. You're devoted to family. You're in that group between sixty 19 finishing considering and beginning an entirely new route.

BORN IN Denzel Pomeroy, writer; Buster Keaton, actor/filmmaker; Rachael Leigh Cook, actress

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Don't get too close to a cause or an ideology. Do it only if you can be objective. Lots of people in different areas are very pretty and looking pretty and cute. Spend others. Listen for today's.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) You're not going to be concerned about the financial burden of children today or worried about how much it costs. Be in a particular social event or neighborhood to pursue it. You'll sense something because you're financially wired.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) It's easy to feel out of or dissatisfied with others today. Don't let this influence to feeling and get to today. Be big deal.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Co-workers, friends, or relatives may, or may not, be. Possible will not readily share information today. Examine this. Don't push matters. Let work to flow.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Romance is in the air for many people today. It's hard to be alone and have fun. Don't worry. Because you're not alone. Don't worry. Because you're not alone today. What others are prepared to explore feeling. Stay with this way.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) Why don't you do something different with your time today? Invite others to participate. Be with the people. Others throughout you today. What others are prepared to explore feeling. Stay with this way.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Don't get too much. Don't get too busy. Worrying is ... and productive, and it accomplishes nothing. It's actually a habit. Whatever you're worrying about will probably be a ... Invest in conversation by listening.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Someone will make you an unusual request today. Be open to it. Be willing to step outside your box of usual responses. Don't take this personally.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) This is a good day to ask permission for anything. Approach those in authority figures—bosses, parents and teachers. The answer today will be "Ask for forgiveness."

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) This year, you have been extremely confident. However, today that confident feeling has vanished. Don't worry about it. Everyone it's just feeling. Stay that's perfectly normal.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) Someone who is ... perhaps ... a friend ... is a bit of a ... today. Don't let others ... Don't be ... Don't ... Don't ... Don't

New TV shows hit the spot

By Nestor U. Torre

"TABOO" ON THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC Channel makes for an absorbing viewing experience, because it blows the lid off some really unconventional beliefs and practices. Other shows also tackle controversy, but "Taboo" is generally more detailed and sensible about sacrificial cannibalism.

Last week, the edgy weekly series' episode, "Gender Benders," focused on the growing transsexual trend, with males transforming themselves meticulously into women, and vice versa.

The documentary eschewed ethical or religious norms, and concentrated on the physical and psychological effects of sex change.

Impersonators

In the process, it revealed that in Thailand alone, the transsexual population count has reached over 300,000. Granted, most of them are "showgirls" or female impersonators, so they can't be said to have moved into mainstream society.

Arresting images offered by the production included two couples who wanted so much to be cross-gender "adventurers"—in both directions: The males turned out to have been originally female, while their sister-to-male spouses were once men!

If that complicated and bizarre convoluted maze of affairs gave some people the hoo-

MCHALE. "Poor man's Ryan Seacrest" no longer.

hin-hinhins, the consequences involved appeared to have no such doubts or scruples, and professed to be perfectly happy with what they had become.

They explained this by pointing out that, psychologically, they felt like "women in men's bodies"—or vice-versa. So, they simply reserved to medical intervention to get rid of the physical discrepancy, so that their psychological equilibrium could finally be established.

Of course, this is a minority and still controversial view, so for objectivity's sake, the production should also have given time and space to the more negative aspects of the transsexual equation. What about the legal and societal realities? The effects on children growing up in a transsexual home? Longer-term medical and psychological consequences of altering genitives?

'The Soup'

Also entertaining viewers, but in a very different way, is the quasi magazine show, "The Soup," hosted by the irrisistible Joel McHale. "The Soup" is not generic, because it's one of the first TV shows to poke fun at—TV itself!

It does this by excerpting many shows' excesses and holding them up for viewers to howl at.

Interestingly, they could be the same viewers who took those excesses quite seriously when they watched them taking place on the original shows. After they've held up to ridicule on "The Soup," however, viewers belatedly realize that they've been patronizing shows, and thank Mchale's program for the impudent illumination.

As for Joel McHale, we tend to describe him as "the poor man's Ryan Seacrest" (they look alike) but this left-handed compliment is no longer apt because, thanks to the "Soup" success of "The Soup," proving Joel has become popular in his own right!

KATHNIEL AND DAVID. Pride of Pinoy jazz.

Becca, Mon and Charmaine headline LA jazz concert

From page F1

Godfrey will be performing new arrangements of bossa music and Mon David has something special from his upcoming CD, "Pitch with a Banana," so you only be on cherry thing evening, musically speaking.

Becca wrote in via e-mail: "Did I mention that I have a background in jazz. (I was the second vocal specialty frosh in college, the first being classical. She also knows I've always loved Bossa/Jazz bossa and sambe song before I met Morris (Albert, her ex-husband). I do speak Portuguese (bom ray since with Morris—and living in Rio in between).

"But asked if I would accept his invitation to sing sambe and bossa songs, I didn't hesitate. I'm very excited to do it. The numbers will be something many people haven't really heard from me; I've chosen four fun numbers that I believe the audience will like. I've asked my friends, Jaden Miranda, Marian Lima and Christy Reyes-Tinio, to join in the fun. They backed me up during Gudiong Gab' in LA last year. Fun evenings equals fun for the crowd. I always work toward making certain the people present can be here as much fun as I have."

Groove

Also via e-mail, Mon shared some of the songs he'll be performing: " 'Tulale (M. Yoshimori)' a song written by singer/songwriter Bonzo Medina, with English lyrics by Jon Hendricks, the lyricist of schools. I'm planning to sing in Italian and Filipino; 'Moonlight Serenade,' a Glenn Miller classic rearranged with a jazz/funk/samba groove...I'm planning to include this in my forthcoming CD; 'No More Blues,' a Johnny Gimble's song made 'cool' (but brass and swing) and lyrics by Hendricks, and 'Bay Pipit,' my version of Lucio San Pedro and Levi Celerio's Pinoy classic, but with Espanyol-type lyrics."

Mon added: "This set list is 70-percent jazz, but some things will depend on the outcome of rehearsals with the band. I'm excited to be joined by Abe Legaspi on drums, Benedict on bass and Ennig Kanlaoglu on keyboards. We hope to raise funds for the 'Fil-Am Library' (he issued a call to Pinoys in LA). "Please join us and do invite your music-loving friends!"

For his part, Tolong said: "I still be the musical director of this show. I'm looking forward to backing up our very own superstar Filipino artists who are now based in the Los Angeles area. I've worked with Gloc-9, Mon and Three of a Kind in past shows, and the chemistry has always been unbelievable! This will be my first time working with Becca, Gudiano and Michael Pardo."

The cast of one legend, Eddie Kamuda, who's earning his awesome in LA's jazz community, continued: "As an artist, I always strive to do 110 percent of my capacity to contribute to the success of every show. Sacramentan? I hope our kababayans will support our own jazz artists."

Contributors

Other recipients of PAJA annual Spirit Awards, which acknowledges contributions to the Filipino community outside Pinoy Southern California, include Jessica Herald (posthumously for community service), The Asian Journal (for community-building journalism) and Mary's Ave corporate philanthropy). Denise Dadoo, ABC7 news anchor and leader in sports, serves as honorary gala chair.

More than 500 guests are expected to attend the gala this year. Net proceeds from the event support the library's various projects. "Sacramentan" is Ilocano for "a person who is a native of Sacramento." Visit www.paja.org for more information.

E-mail: rsopolo 1550@yahoo.com, and read Ms Ilio's column, "The Filipino Report," at http://blogs.inquirer.net/reportsfromla.

Remembering Tarzan's better half

By Bobi Carvajosa

"SHE TARZAN, YOU ASS!" INTRODUCED the lips Mimi's partner to his fans. By the time the pretty damsel from England entered Tarzan's life, there had already been a highly successful series about the infant lord who survived a plane crash under the care of female apes in an African forest.

Enter Jane, the educated lady who became smitten with the gentle jungle man. She became an admirer of the primate life in the African jungle. She taught Tarzan manners and turned his treehouse into a veritable jungle mansion.

Since the series ran for decades, there were almost as many Janes as there were Tarzans.

Most memorable of them all was Maureen O'Sullivan, a beauteous actress from Ireland. It was during the successful "reign" of Olympian swimmers, Johnny Weissmuller, when Hollywood producers thought it was time to get the Ape Man a bride. As expected, she captured Tarzan's heart and lived happily ever after in his jungle retreats.

O'SULLIVAN AND WEISSMULLER. Photo of jane and Tarzan in popular adventure series.

The print screens looked perfect as "Tarzan and His Mate." But size was no different concept to Weissmuller's macho build, and her voice as genteel as his was rough.

The jungle motion was so successful Maureen and Johnny did at least half a dozen successful films.

Other actresses/Janes included Brenda Joyce, who appeared in three films with Lex Barker—the Tarzan heroes known for his love affairs with Hollywood sirens like Lana Turner and Ardora Hatti.

Successful career

Vera Miles, who is best remembered as the tantalizing mother of Janet Leigh in "Psycho," also portrayed Jane. She stole the Tarzan/Jane romance one step further...she married Gordon Scott, her Tarzan! After she divorced Scott, she then had a rather successful career as a leading lady.

Maureen Brown, a pretty brunette also played Jane after she appeared in a supporting role in Warners Wonderful's "The Bad and the Beautiful."

Jane was always supportive to Tarzan—until John Derek decided to showcase his wife, Bo Derek, in his version of Tarzan. Unfortunately, we only remember Bo's perfect 10 qualities in that film—and forget Tarzan!

Pinoy Kids' Choice Awards nominees announced

THE NOMINEES ARE IN! NOW YOU CAN start voting! Nickstars, 13 (but time of the year to celebrate your power to choose, because the much-awaited Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards is back, and this time, it's on your usual premiere party.

That final event of all Pinoy Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards (Feb. 2009, will be bigger, better and, definitely, they're all about you! Now, it will be one full show with seven awards to be given out, so check out the nominees, and vote for your choice.

Multi-awarded ace comedian, Michael V, will host the event on Nov. 29.

This year's nominees:

Favorite Actor: Dingdong Dantes, Gerald Anderson, John Lloyd Cruz, Piolo Pascual and Richard Gutierrez.

Favorite Actress: Angel Locsin, Iza Calzado, Kim Chiu, Marian Rivera and Sandy Goroyanes.

Favorite TV Show: "Bubble Gang," "Goin' Bulilit," "Starstruck," "The Singing Bee" and "Zaido: Pulis Pangkalawakan."

Favorite Athlete: Chito Tiu, Efren "Bata" Reyes, Jayvee Lizardo, Manny Pacquiao and Miguel Molina.

Favorite Cartoon Show: "Avatar, The Legend of Aang," "Ben 10," "Dora The Explorer," "Spongebob Squarebob" and "Tom & Jerry."

Favorite Musical Act: Christian Bautista, Gary Valenciano, Parokya ni Edgar, Sandwich and Yeng Constantino.

Pinoy Nickstar 2008: Cianne Dionisio, KC Concepcion, Lea Salonga, Miss Nelson and Vhong Navarro.

Voting is big on the http://fun.inquirer.net. By voting online, you get a chance to score tickets to the Nov. 29 event. You can also text NICK to 2622 to vote. SMS and online voting is ongoing until Nov. 15.

From Oct. 1to 31, you can go to participating Toy Kingdom stores, vote for your favorites, and get a chance to be one of the Nick Kids to win a toy run worth P120,000.

Mixing Mutya

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

JOURNAL Subscription Circulation Home Pinoy Metro category

FOR GASTRONOMIC TRIPPERS, ALL ROADS led to the World Trade Center in Pasay City recently when the country's best and brightest ordinary talents converged in the three-day "Food Showdown 2008." The event was highlighted by exciting competitions for both practicing professionals and students from 26 participating schools nationwide. The competition was chaired by Myrna Segismundo, editor in chief of Inside Magazine.

Joy Lucenio, a third year student of De La Salle College of St. Benilde, was declared the sole winner in the Classic Junior Pinoy Metro category, in which she bagged a bronze. She shared, "It was my first time to join an interschool contest. I had a month to prepare, and I thank my teachers, Consuelo Elle, Paul Cerezo and Jessie Pineda, who were patient enough to motivate their stressed-like me.

"Since the event was Filipino-themed, I named my drink 'Mutya.' It's made of fresh lucuma, pineapple juice and syrup, garnished with tamisa fruit, cherry and a pineapple leaf. The competition was intense! But, it was a pleasure to share that experience with 25 other academia participants. I was glad to bring honor to my school!"

* * *

Join the Mandy Navasero Bonsai Drive-by. Set on Feb. 20-23, March 19-16 or 27-30, April 3-6 or 24-27, May 8-11 or 15-18. Also, the day prior to Laguna Ilipina Festival will be on Nov. 21-23. Book early at mandynavasero@yahoo.com, or call 896-5288.

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